PHILOTHEA:

OR AN

INTRODUCTION

TO A

DEVOUT LIFE.

BY

St. Francis de Sales.

Newly tranſlated into Engliſh, from the original French, according to the laſt Edition, reviſed and corrected by the SAINT himſelf, a little before his Death.

By R. C.

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THE *Philothea*, or *Introduction to a devout life*, ſet forth by St. *Francis de Sales*, at its firſt appearing in the world, was received with ſo great, and ſo general an eſteem and applauſe, by all true lovers of Chriſtian piety, that it was quickly ſpread by a variety of editions and tranſlations, over the greateſt part of Chriſtendom. It had even croſſed the ſeas into our Britiſh Iſlands, in three ſeveral editions in Engliſh, before the end of the year 1614 (that is, full eight years before the death of the Author) and in many more after that time, eſpecially after a new tranſlation of it was publiſhed about the middle of the laſt century. But the ſetters forth of theſe latter editions, whilſt they made a profeſſion of correcting and amending the ancient tranſlation, have taken too great a liberty in altering the words and expreſſions of the Saint, to the prejudice of the unction and ſpirit of the original: and, at the ſame time, have been guilty of many omiſſions, ſometimes of whole lines; as well as of many groſs miſtakes of the true ſenſe and meaning of the holy prelate.

Theſe errata of the tranſlators, by diligently examining and comparing their verſion with the French original, according to the copy reviſed and corrected by the Saint a little before his death, we found to be ſo very numerous, and this in almoſt every page, that we thought it neceſſary to ſet forth a new tranſlation of this venerable work from tha ſame corrected copy, and in it to preſent our Britiſh readers with the true ſenſe and meaning of

the Saint, as much as poſſible, in the very ſtile and words of the Saint, as moſt expreſſive of, and moſt agreeable to the ſpirit of the Saint. 'Tis what we have endeavoured to do in the following ſheets.

As to the communication of Dr. *Thauler* with the Beggar, which has generally been joined with the introduction, in the Engliſh editions of it, (though not found in the French original) we have alſo allowed it a place in this tranſlation: by reaſon of the admirable leſſons it contains of conformity with the holy will of God. But as here alſo, by collating the Engliſh with the Latin, as publiſhed in *Thauler*'s works, we found a very wide diſtance between the one and the other, we have been obliged to furniſh our readers with a new tranſlation from that ſame Latin.

AN

ABSTRACT

OF THE

AUTHOR's LIFE:

From the LESSONS read on his FESTIVAL in the ROMAN BREVIARY.

FRANCIS, born of pious and noble parents in the town of *Sales*, which gave name to his family, from his tender years gave ſigns of his future ſanctity, by the innocence of his manners, and his gravity. Having learnt in his youth the liberal diſciplines, he ſoon after applied himſelf to the ſtudy of Philoſophy and Theology at *Paris*: And that nothing might be wanting to the cultivating his mind, he obtained the degree of Doctor, both in the canon and in the civil law, with very great applauſe, in the univerſity of *Padua*. In a viſit he made to the holy houſe of *Loretto*, he renewed the vow of perpetual chaſtity, which he had long before made at *Paris*. And from the reſolute adheſion to this virtue, he never ſuffered himſelf to be withdrawn, either by any of the deceits of wicked ſpirits, or by any of the allurements of the ſenſes.

Having refuſed an eminent dignity, which was offered him in the Parliament of *Savoy*, he entered himſelf to ſerve amongſt the Clergy: And being ordained prieſt, and made provoſt of the church of *Geneva*, he ſo perfectly diſcharged himſelf of every duty of that ſtation, that *Granerius* the biſhop made choice of him, and ſent him to preach the word of God, for the reclaiming from Calviniſm the people of *Chablais*, and of other territories bordering upon *Geneva*. This

expedition he undertook with a ready and chearful mind: in the courſe of which, he ſuffered all imaginable labours and hardſhips, was often ſought for by the hereticks, and in danger of being aſſaſſinated by them; and endured from them a variety of calumnies and injuries. But in the midſt of ſo many dangers and conflicts, his invincible conſtancy was always conſpicuous: inſomuch that being protected by the aſſiſtance of God, he is ſaid to have brought back to the Catholic faith no fewer than ſeventy-two thouſand hereticks; amongſt whom many are numbered illuſtrious for their nobility and learning.

After the death of *Granerius*, who had procured that he ſhould be appointed his coadjutor, being conſecrated biſhop, he ſpread abroad on all ſides the bright rays of his ſanctity; being illuſtrious for his zeal for church diſcipline, for his love of peace, for his mercy for the poor, and for all other virtues. For the increaſe of the honour and ſervice of God, he inſtituted a new order of religious women, taking its name from the Viſitation of the bleſſed Virgin, under the rule of St. *Auſtin*; to which he added his own conſtitutions, admirable for their wiſdom, diſcretion, and ſweetneſs. He alſo illuſtrated the church with his writings, full of heavenly doctrine; in which he points out a ſafe and plain way to Chriſtian perfection. At length in the fifty-eighth year of his age, being upon his return out of France to Anneſſy, after having celebrated maſs at *Lyons*, on the day of St. John the Evangeliſt, he was taken with a grievous illneſs, and on the following day departed to heaven, in the year of our Lord 1622. His body was carried to Anneſſy, and honourably interred in the church of the nuns of the aforeſaid order; where it preſently began to be illuſtrated with miracles: which being duly proved, he was canonized for a Saint by Pope Alexander VII. (anno 1665) and the 29th day of January was aſſigned for his feſtivity.

In

In the bull of his canonization, the following miracles are recorded, as having been upon the ſtricteſt examination found to be inconteſtable.

1. *Jerome Gemin*, who had been drowned; was carried in his winding ſheet to be buried, his dead carcaſs by its ſtench denoting its beginning to be putrified: when on a ſudden he returned to life, moved his arms, and raiſed his voice to publiſh the praiſes of *Francis de Sales*; who, as he related, at that very inſtant of time, had appeared to him in his epiſcopal habit, with a moſt ſweet and glorious countenance, with other wonderful circumſtances greatly adding to the luſtre of the miracle.

2. *Claud Marmon*, a boy of ſeven years of age, who was born blind, and had never had any uſe of his eyes, after performing nine days prayers, when he was lying proſtrate at the tomb of the holy prelate, received his ſight upon the ſpot.

3. *Jane Petronilla Evrax*, five years old, labouring under a palſy, in ſuch manner as to have no hopes of ever being able to walk, her hips and legs being quite withered: in the very hour that her father was praying for her at the tomb of Francis, was ſuddenly and perfectly cured, and getting up ran to her mother.

4. *Claud Juliar*, afflicted in like manner with a palſy for ten years, which he had brought with him into the world, in ſuch manner as to have no uſe at all either of his hips or of his legs, being carried, by his mother for the third time, to kiſs the tomb of *Francis de Sales*, received upon the ſpot ſtrength and vigour in all thoſe joints and limbs, which were uſeleſs before, and in a moment of time raiſed himſelf up, ſtood upon his feet, and walked.

5. *Frances de la Peſſe*, who had fallen into the river and was there drowned, was reſtored to life (at the tomb, and by the interceſſion of the ſame holy prelate) all the marks of deformity, which that dreadful accident had left in her body, together

with the livid colour, and ſwelling, being all ſuddenly and wonderfully removed.

6. *James Guidi*, whoſe nerves were contracted, and who had always been an abſolute cripple from his birth (imploring the aſſiſtance of the prayers of the ſame ſervant of God) was ſuddenly and perfectly cured.

7. *Charles Moteron*, who likewiſe from his very birth had been impotent in all his limbs, and ſtrangely deformed in his whole body, was alſo (by the interceſſion of *Francis de Sales*) ſuddenly delivered; ſo as to receive upon the ſpot the perfect figure of a man, which he had not before, and the uſe of his limbs, ſo as to be able to walk.

All theſe miracles, with their reſpective circumſtances, were proved with the utmoſt evidence, both as to the matters of fact which were atteſted by many ſworn eye-witneſſes; and as to their being clearly beyond all the power of nature or art: the more, becauſe they were all of them wrought almoſt inſtantaneouſly.

A

DEDICATORY PRAYER

OF THE

AUTHOR.

O Sweet Jeſus, my Lord, my Saviour, and my God, behold me here proſtrate before thy Majeſty, devoting and conſecrating this work to thy glory: give life to its words by thy bleſſing, that thoſe ſouls for which I have made it, may receive from it the ſacred inſpirations which I deſire for them. And particularly that of imploring for me thy infinite mercy; to the end that, while I ſhew others the way of devotion in this world, I may not myſelf be eternally rejected and confounded in the other: but that with them I may for ever ſing for a canticle of triumph, the words which with my whole heart I pronounce, in teſtimony of my fidelity amidſt the hazards of this mortal life, *Live Jeſus, live Jeſus; Yea, Lord Jeſus, live and reign in our hearts for ever and ever.* Amen.

THE

AUTHOR's PREFACE.

My dear READER, I pray thee to read this PREFACE for thy Satisfaction and mine.

THE noſegay-maker *Glycera* knew ſo well how to diverſify in a proper manner the ordering and mixing of her flowers, that with the ſame flowers ſhe made a great variety of noſegays; inſomuch, that the painter *Pauſias* vying with her to imitate this diverſity of works, fell ſhort of his purpoſe, for he could not change his painting in ſo many different ways as *Glycera* did her noſegays. In like manner the Holy Ghoſt diſpoſes and orders with ſo much variety the inſtructions of devotion, he gives us by the tongues and pens of his ſervants, that the doctrine being ſtill the ſame, the diſcourſes notwithſtanding, which are made of it, are very different according to the divers methods in which they are compoſed. I neither can, nor will, nor ought indeed to write in this introduction any thing but what has been already publiſhed by our predeceſſors upon this ſubject. The flowers which I preſent thee, dear reader, are the ſame; but the noſegay, I have made of them, will be different from theirs, as being made up in a different order and method.

Almoſt all they, that have treated of devotion, have had in view the inſtruction of perſons wholly retired from the commerce of the world; or have at leaſt taught a kind of devotion, leading to this abſolute retirement. My intention is to inſtruct ſuch as live in towns, in families, or at court, and who by their condition are obliged to lead as to the exteriour a common life, who very often, under the colour of a pretended impoſſibility, will not ſo much as think of undertaking a devout life; believing, that as no beaſt

beaſt dares to taſte the ſeed of the herb called *Palma Chriſti*, ſo no man ought to pretend to the palm of Chriſtian piety, ſo long as he lives in the throng of temporal affairs. Now to them I make appear that, as the mother-pearls live in the ſea, without receiving one drop of ſalt water; and as towards the *Chelidonian* iſlands there are ſprings of freſh water in the midſt of the ſea; and as the fire-fly flies in the flames without burning its wings: ſo a vigorous and conſtant ſoul may live in the world, without partaking of any worldly humour; may find out ſprings of ſweet piety amidſt the ſalt waters of the world; and fly amongſt the flames of earthly concupiſcences, without burning the wings of the holy deſires of a devout life. 'Tis true, this is a difficult thing, and therefore I could wiſh that many would employ their care about it with more ardour than has been hitherto done; and I, weak as I am, make ſome eſſay by this writing to contribute ſome kind of help to ſuch, as with a generous heart ſhall undertake this worthy enterprize.

Yet it was not however either by my choice or inclination, that this introduction now appears in publick. A ſoul truly full of honour and of virtue, having ſome time ſince received of God the grace of aſpiring to a devout life, deſired my particular aſſiſtance to that purpoſe: and, I being many ways obliged to that perſon, and having long before obſerved in the perſon a great diſpoſition to this deſign, applied myſelf very diligently to their inſtruction; and having conducted them through all the exerciſes ſuitable to their deſire and condition, I left with them certain memorials in writing, to make uſe of as they ſhould have occaſion. This party afterwards communicated them to a great, learned, and devout religious man, who believing that many might reap profit from them, earneſtly exhorted me to have them publiſhed; and it was eaſy for him to perſuade me to it; becauſe his friendſhip had great power on my will, and his judgment a great authority over mine.

Now to the end the whole might be more profitable and agreeable, I have reviewed it, and put it into a kind of method, adding many advices and inſtructions proper to my intention. But all this I have done, having ſcarce any leiſure at all: for which reaſon thou ſhalt find in it nothing exact, but only a heap of good admonitions which I deliver in plain and intelligible words, at leaſt I deſired ſo to do. And as for other ornaments of language, I have not ſo much as thought of them, having other things enough to do.

I addreſs my diſcourſe to *Philothea*, becauſe deſiring to reduce to the common advantage of many ſouls, what I at firſt had written for one only, I make uſe of a name common to all ſuch as deſire to be devout: for *Philothea* ſignifies a ſoul loving or in love with God. Regarding then in all this work a ſoul which by the deſire of devotion aſpires to the love of God, I have divided this introduction into five parts. In the firſt, I endeavour by certain remonſtrances and exerciſes to convert the ſimple deſire of *Philothea* into an intire reſolution, which ſhe makes at laſt, after her general confeſſion, by a firm proteſtation, followed by the moſt holy communion, in which giving herſelf up to her Saviour, and receiving him, ſhe enters happily into his holy love. That done, to lead her farther on, I ſhew her two great means to unite herſelf more and more to his divine Majeſty; viz. the uſe of the Sacraments, by which this good God comes to us; and holy prayer, by which he draws us up to him: and in this I employ the ſecond part. In the third, I ſhew her how ſhe ought to exerciſe herſelf in divers virtues moſt proper for her advancement: not ſtopping but at ſome particular advices, which ſhe could hardly have received elſewhere, or found out herſelf. In the fourth part, I diſcover to her ſome ambuſhes of her enemies, ſhewing her how ſhe may eſcape them, and go forward in her worthy undertaking. In the fifth and laſt part, I make her

retire

retire a little to refreſh herſelf, recover breath, and repair her ſtrength, that ſhe may afterwards more happily gain ground, and go forward in a devout life.

This is a very capricious age, and, I foreſee, many will ſay that it belongs only to religious men, and perſons of devotion, to give ſuch particular directions to piety; that they require more leiſure than a biſhop can have, who is charged with a dioceſe ſo heavy as mine; that this too much diſtracts the underſtanding, which ſhould be employed in affairs of importance. But I (my dear reader) ſay to thee with the great S. *Denys*, that it belongs principally to biſhops to bring ſouls to perfection; ſince their order is ſupreme among men, as that of the ſeraphims is among the angels: ſo that their leiſure cannot be better employed than in that. The ancient biſhops and fathers of the church were at leaſt as careful of their charge, as we: yet they declined not, for all that, to take care of the particular conduct of divers ſouls which had recourſe to their aſſiſtance; as appears by their epiſtles, in which they imitated the apoſtles, who amidſt the general harveſt of the world, pickt up notwithſtanding certain remarkable ears of corn, with a ſpecial and a particular affection. Who knows not that *Timothy*, *Titus*, *Philemon*, *Oneſimus*, S. *Thecla*, and *Appia*, were the dear children of the great S. *Paul*; as S. *Mark* and S. *Petronilla* were of S. *Peter*? S. *Petronilla* I ſay, who (as *Baronius*, and *Galonius* learnedly prove) was not St. *Peter*'s carnal, but only his ſpiritual daughter. And does not St. *John* write one of his canonical epiſtles to the devout lady *Electa*?

'Tis a pain, I confeſs, to guide ſouls in particular; but a pain, that gives comfort like that of the labourers in the harveſt and the vintage, who are never better pleaſed, than when they have moſt to do, and when their burthens are the heavieſt. It is a labour which refreſhes and revives the heart by the

ſweet delight it brings to thoſe that are engaged in it; as the cinnamon does by thoſe that carry it through *Arabia Felix.* They ſay, the tygreſs having found one of her whelps, which the huntſman leaves in the way to amuſe her while he carries away the reſt of the litter, loads herſelf with it be it ever ſo big, and yet is not more heavy for that, but rather more light in the courſe ſhe makes to ſecure it in her den; natural love making her lighter by this her burthen. How much more willingly then will a fatherly heart take in charge a ſoul, which he has found in the deſire of holy perfection; carrying it in his boſom, as a mother doth her little child, without being ſenſible of ſo beloved a burthen! But this muſt be in deed a fatherly heart; and therefore the apoſtles, and apoſtolic men, call their diſciples not only their Children, but ſtill more tenderly, their Little Children.

It is true, my dear reader, I am here writing of a devout life, without being devout myſelf; yet certainly not without a deſire of becoming ſo. And it is this affection to it which encourages me to inſtruct thee. For, as a great learned man ſaid, to ſtudy is a good way to learn, to hear is a better, but to teach is the beſt of all. It often happens (ſaith St. *Auſtin*, writing to his devout *Florentina*) *that the office of diſtributing gives us the merit of receiving, and the office of teaching ſerves us for a foundation of learning.* *Alexander* cauſed the picture of his fair *Compaſpe*, who was ſo dear to him, to be drawn by the hand of the ſingular *Apelles*; who, being forced to conſider *Compaſpe* for a long time together, as faſt as he drew her features in his picture, imprinted the love of them in his heart, and became ſo paſſionate for her, that *Alexander*, coming to the knowledge of it, and taking pity on him, gave her to him in marriage, depriving himſelf for his ſake, of the woman whom he loved the beſt in the world: in which (ſaith *Pliny*) he ſhewed the greatneſs of his heart as much, as he would have done by the moſt ſignal victory.

Now

Now I am of opinion, my dear reader, that it is the will of God, that being a biſhop I ſhould paint upon the hearts of his people, not only common virtues, but alſo his moſt dear and well-beloved devotion. And I willingly undertake the office, as well in obedience to him, and to do my duty, as for the hope I have that ingraving her in the minds of others, my own may become holily enamoured of her. Now if ever his divine Majeſty ſhall ſee me paſſionately in love with her, he will give her to me in an eternal marriage. The fair and chaſte *Rebecca*, watering *Iſaac*'s Camels, was deſtined to be his wife, and received on his part golden ear-rings and bracelets. Thus do I promiſe myſelf, from the infinite goodneſs of God, that conducting his dear ſheep to the wholeſome waters of devotion, he will make my ſoul his ſpouſe, putting in my ears the golden words of his holy love, and on my arms the ſtrength to practiſe them, in which conſiſts the eſſence of true devotion, which I humbly beſeech his Majeſty to grant to me, and to all the children of his church, to which I will for ever ſubmit my writings, my actions, my words, my wills, and my thoughts.

At Anneſſy, this day of St. M. Magdalen, 1609.

THE

THE FIRST PART OF THE INTRODUCTION

CONTAINING

ADVICES AND EXERCISES

Requisite for the conducting of the SOUL from her first Desire of a DEVOUT LIFE, till she be brought to a full Resolution to embrace it.

CHAP. I.

The Description of true Devotion.

YOU aspire to devotion, my dearest *Philothea*, because being a Christian, you know devotion is a virtue extremely pleasing to the Divine Majesty. But since small faults which are committed in the beginning of any business, in the progress grow infinitely greater, and in the end are almost irreparable; you must in the first place know, what the virtue of devotion is: for since there is but one true devotion, and very many which are false and vain, if you know not which is the true, you may easily deceive and amuse yourself in following some impertinent and superstitious devotion.

Aurelius painted all the faces of the pictures which he drew to the air and resemblance of the women he loved; and every one paints devotion according to his

his own paſſion and fancy. He that is addicted to faſting, ſhall think himſelf very devout, if he do but faſt, though his heart be full of rancour: and not daring to moiſten his tongue with wine, or even with water, through ſobriety, ſhall make no difficulty to drink deep of his neighbour's blood by detraction and calumny. Another ſhall account himſelf devout for reciting a multitude of prayers every day, though afterwards he gives his tongue full liberty to utter very diſagreeable, arrogant and injurious words amongſt his domeſticks and neighbours. One willingly draws an alms out of his purſe to give to the poor, but cannot draw meekneſs out of his heart, to forgive his enemies. Another ſhall forgive his enemies, but ſhall never ſatisfy his creditors, but by conſtraint. All theſe people are by ſome eſteemed devout, when indeed they are by no means ſo.

Saul's ſervants ſought *David* in his houſe; but *Michol*, having laid a ſtatue in his bed, and covered it with *David*'s cloaths, made them believe it was *David* himſelf ſick in bed: ſo many perſons cover themſelves with certain external actions belonging to holy devotion, and the world believes them truly devout and ſpiritual; whereas indeed they are but ſtatues and phantoms of devotion.

True and living devotion, O *Philothea*, pre-ſuppoſes the love of God: yea rather it is nothing elſe but a true love of God, yet not every ſort of love. For in as much as divine love adorns the ſoul, it is called grace, making us pleaſing to his Divine Majeſty: in as much as it gives us the ſtrength to do good, it is called charity: but when it is arrived at that degree of perfection, by which it not only makes us do well, but alſo to work diligently, frequently and readily, then it is called devotion.

Oſtriches never fly; hens fly heavily, but low and ſeldom; but eagles, doves, and ſwallows fly often, ſwift and high: ſo ſinners fly not at all in God, but make all their courſes on the earth, and for the things

of

of the earth: good people who are not yet arrived at devotion, fly in God by their good works, but rarely, ſlowly and heavily; devout ſouls fly in God frequently, readily, and take higher flights. In ſhort, devotion is nothing elſe but a ſpiritual agility and vivacity, by means of which, charity works in us, or we by her, readily and affectionately; and as it is the buſineſs of charity to make us obſerve all God's commandments generally and univerſally, ſo it is the part of devotion to make us obſerve them readily and diligently. Wherefore he, who obſerves not all the commandments of God, cannot be eſteemed either good or devout: ſince to be good, he muſt have charity; and to be devout, beſides charity, he muſt have a great livelineſs and readineſs in charitable actions.

And for as much as devotion conſiſts in a certain degree of excellent charity, it makes us not only ready, active, and diligent in the obſervation of all God's commandments; but it alſo excites us to perform readily and with affection all the good works we can, though they be not at all commanded, but only counſelled or inſpired. For as a man, newly healed of ſome infirmity, walks as much as is neceſſary for him, but yet leiſurely and heavily; ſo a ſinner, being healed of his iniquity, walks ſo far as God commands him, yet ſlowly and heavily, till ſuch time as he attains to devotion: for then, like a ſound man, he not only walks, but even runs, and ſprings forward in the way of God's commandments; and moreover advances and haſtens on in the paths of the heavenly counſels and inſpirations.

To conclude, charity and devotion differ no more one from the other, than the fire from the flame: for charity is a ſpiritual fire which, when it flames out, is called devotion; ſo that devotion adds nothing to the fire of charity, but the flame, which makes charity ready, active, and diligent, not only in the obſervance of the commandments of God, but alſo in the execution of heavenly counſels and inſpirations.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Property and Excellency of Devotion.

THEY, who diſcouraged the *Iſraelites* from going into the land of promiſe, told them it was a country which devoured its inhabitants; that is to ſay, that the air was ſo bad, that it was impoſſible to live long there; and further, that the natives were ſuch monſters, that they eat up other men like locuſts. So the world (my dear *Philothea*) defames as much as it can holy devotion, repreſenting devout perſons with a peeviſh, ſad, and ſullen countenance; pretending that devotion begets melancholy, and inſupportable humours. But as *Joſue* and *Caleb* proteſted, not only that the promiſed land was good and fair, but alſo that the poſſeſſion of it would be ſweet and agreeable: ſo the Holy Ghoſt, by the mouths of all the Saints, and our Saviour by his own, aſſures us, that a devout life is a life which is ſweet, happy and amiable.

The world ſees that devout people faſt, pray, and ſuffer injuries, that they ſerve the ſick, give to the poor, watch, reſtrain their anger, ſtifle their paſſions, deprive themſelves of ſenſual pleaſures, and do ſuch other actions as are in themſelves ſharp and rigorous: but the world ſees not the inward cordial devotion, which renders all theſe actions agreeable, ſweet and eaſy. Look at the bees upon the thyme; they find there a very bitter juice, yet in ſucking it, they convert it into honey, becauſe ſuch is their property. O worldlings! It is true, devout ſouls find much bitterneſs in their exerciſes of mortification; but in performing them they convert them into ſweetneſs and pleaſure. The fires, the flames, the wheels, the ſwords, ſeemed to be flowers and perfumes to the martyrs, becauſe they were devout. If then devotion can give a ſweetneſs to the moſt cruel torments,

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and even to death itſelf, what will it do for the actions of virtue? Sugar ſweetens green fruits, and corrects whatever there is of crudity and unwholeſomneſs in them that are ripe. Now devotion is the true ſpiritual ſugar, which takes away bitterneſs from mortification, and hurtfulneſs from conſolation: it takes away diſcontent from the poor, and ſolicitude from the rich; deſolation from the oppreſſed, and inſolence from the exalted; ſadneſs from him that is ſolitary, and diſſolution from him that is in company: it ſerves for fire in winter, and for dew in ſummer: it knows how to abound, and how to ſuffer want: it renders equally profitable honour and contempt: it entertains pleaſure and pain with a heart almoſt always alike, and it fills us with admirable ſweetneſs.

Contemplate *Jacob*'s ladder: for it is the true picture of a devout life. The two ſides, between which we aſcend, and to which the rounds are faſtened, repreſent prayer, which obtains the love of God, and the ſacraments which confer it: the rounds are nothing but the divers degrees of charity, by which we advance from virtue to virtue, either deſcending by action to the help and ſuppport of our neighbour, or aſcending by contemplation in an amorous union with God. Now look (I beſeech you) upon thoſe who are on this ladder: they are either men who have angelical hearts, or angels who have human bodies. They are not young; yet they ſeem ſo, becauſe they are full of vigour and ſpiritual activity. They have wings to fly, and ſoar up to God by holy prayer; but they have feet alſo to walk with men by a holy and amiable converſation. Their countenances are fair and chearful, becauſe they receive all things with ſweetneſs and content. Their legs, their arms, and their heads are all bare, becauſe their thoughts, their affections, and their actions have no other deſign, nor motive, than to pleaſe God: the reſt of their body is covered only with a fair and light robe,

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to ſhew, that they make uſe indeed of the world and worldly things, yet in a moſt pure and ſincere manner, not taking more of them, than is neceſſary for their condition. Such are devout perſons. Believe me (dear *Philothea*) devotion is the pleaſure of pleaſures, and the queen of virtues, ſhe is the perfection of charity. If charity be milk, devotion is the cream: if charity be a plant, devotion is its flower: if charity a precious ſtone, devotion is its luſtre: if charity be a rich balm, devotion is its odour; yea, the odour of ſweetneſs, which comforts men, and rejoices angels.

CHAP III.

That devotion is ſuitable with all ſorts of vocations and Profeſſions.

IN the Creation God commanded the plants to bring forth their fruits every one according to its kind; even ſo he commands all chriſtians, who are the living plants of his church, to bring forth the fruits of devotion, every one according to his quality and vocation. Devotion ought to be differently exerciſed by the gentleman, by the tradeſman, by the ſervant, by the prince, by the widow, by the maid, and by the married woman: and not only ſo, but the practice alſo of devotion muſt be fitted to the ſtrength, to the employments, and the obligations of each one in particular. For I pray thee (*Philothea*) would it be fit for the biſhop to be ſolitary, like the *Carthuſian?* And if married people would ſtore up no more than the *Capuchins*; if the tradeſman were to be all day long in the church, like the religious, or the religious continually expoſed to all manner of encounters for the ſervice of his neighbour, as the biſhop; would not this devotion be ridiculous, prepoſterous, and inſupportable? This fault nevertheleſs happens very often; and the world,

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which diſtinguiſhes not, or will not put a difference between devotion and the indiſcretion of thoſe who take themſelves to be devout, blames and murmurs at devotion, which cannot help theſe diſorders.

No, *Philothea*, devotion does no harm at all, when it is true, but rather gives a perfection to all things: and when it is not ſuitable with the lawful vocation of any perſon, then without doubt it is falſe. The bee (ſays *Ariſtotle*) draws honey from the flowers without hurting them, leaving them as entire and freſh as ſhe found them: but true devotion goes yet farther, for it not only does no hurt to any ſort of vocation or employment, but on the contrary adorns and beautifies it. All ſorts of precious ſtones, caſt into honey, receive a greater luſtre, each one according to its colour; and all people become more agreeable in their vocation, joining it with devotion. The care of the family is rendered by it more peaceable; the love of the huſband and of the wife more ſincere; the ſervice of the prince more faithful; and all ſorts of employments more pleaſant and amiable.

It is an error, or rather an hereſy, to pretend to baniſh a devout life from the companies of ſoldiers, the ſhops of tradeſmen, the courts of Princes, or the families of married people. It is true, *Philothea*, that devotion purely contemplative, monaſtical, and religious, cannot be exerciſed in thoſe vocations: but beſides theſe three ſorts of devotion, there are divers others proper to bring to perfection thoſe who live in ſecular conditions: *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, *David*, *Job*, *Tobias*, *Sarah*, *Rebecca*, and *Judith*, bear witneſs of this in the old teſtament; and in the new S. *Joſeph*, *Lydia*, and S. *Criſpin*, were perfectly devout in their ſhops: S. *Ann*, S. *Martha*, S. *Monica*, *Aquila*, *Priſcilla*, in their families: *Cornelius*, S. *Sebaſtian*, S. *Maurice*, in the Army: *Conſtantine*, *Helena*, S. *Lewis*, bleſſed *Amedæus*, and S. *Edward*, on their thrones. Nay it has happened, that many have

have loſt perfection in ſolitude which notwithſtanding is ſo deſirable for perfection, and have preſerved it in company which ſeems ſo little favourable to perfection. *Lot*, ſays S. *Gregory*, who was ſo chaſte in the city, defiled himſelf in the wilderneſs: whereſoever we are, we may, and ought to aſpire to a perfect life.

CHAP. IV.

Of the neceſſity of a guide to enter into and proceed in devotion.

YOUNG *Tobias*, being commanded to go to *Rages*, anſwered, I know no part of the way: Go then (replied his father) and ſeek ſome man to conduct thee. I ſay the ſame to you, my *Philothea*; would you in good earneſt walk towards devotion? ſeek ſome good man, who may guide and conduct you, this is the advice of advices. Tho' you ſearch (ſays the devout *Avila*) you ſhall never ſo aſſuredly find the will of God, as by the way of this humble obedience, ſo much recommended and practiſed by all the ancient devotes. The bleſſed mother *Tereſia*, ſeeing the lady *Catharine* of *Cardona* perform ſo great penances, deſired much to imitate her therein againſt the advice of her confeſſor, who forbid it, whom ſhe was much tempted to diſobey in that particular: but God ſaid to her, Daughter, thou art in a good and ſecure way: ſeeſt thou her penance? But I value more thy obedience. And hence ſhe ſo highly eſteemed this virtue, that beſides the obedience ſhe owed to her ſuperiors, ſhe vowed a particular one to an excellent man, whoſe direction and conduct ſhe obliged herſelf to follow, by which ſhe was infinitely comforted, as well as many other devout ſouls before and after her, who, for the more entire ſubjecting of themſelves to God, have ſubmitted their wills to that of his ſervants; which S. *Catharine* of *Sienna* highly

applauds

applauds in her dialogues. The devout princeſs S. *Elizabeth* ſubmitted herſelf with an entire obedience to Doctor *Conradus*. And one of the advices, given by the great St. *Lewis* to his ſon, a little before his death, was this, Confeſs often, chooſe a good confeſſor, a wiſe man, who may ſafely teach thee to do the things that ſhall be neceſſary for thee to do.

A faithful friend (ſays the Holy Scripture) *is a ſtrong defence; he that has found him, has found a treaſure. A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality: and they that fear the Lord, ſhall find him.* Ecclus. vi. 14. 16. Theſe divine words look chiefly, as you ſee, at a happy immortality; for which it is principally neceſſary to have this faithful friend, who by his directions and counſels, may guide us in our actions, and by this means ſecure us from the ambuſhes and deceits of the wicked one. He will be to us as a treaſure of wiſdom in our afflictions, in our ſorrows, and our falls; he will ſerve us as a medicine, to eaſe and comfort our hearts in our ſpiritual diſeaſes; he will preſerve us from evil, and make our good better: and when any infirmity ſhall befal us, he will hinder it from being unto death, for he will help us to recover.

But who ſhall find this friend? The wiſe man anſwers: *They that fear the Lord*, that is, the humble, who earneſtly deſire their ſpiritual advancement. Since then it imports you ſo much, *Philothea*, to walk with a good guide in this holy journey of devotion, beſeech God with great inſtance to furniſh you with ſuch an one as may be according to his own heart; and doubt not, for he will rather ſend you an Angel from heaven, as he did to young *Tobias*, than fail to give you a good and faithful one.

Now he ought always to be an Angel to you; that is to ſay, when you ſhall have found him, conſider him not as a mere man, nor truſt in him as ſuch, or in his human learning, but in God who will favour you, and ſpeak to you by the means of this man; putting

ting in his heart, and in his mouth, whatſoever ſhall be requiſite for your happineſs: ſo that you ought to hear him as an Angel who comes down from Heaven to conduct you thither. Treat with him with an open heart, in all ſincerity and fidelity, manifeſting clearly to him your good and your ill, without fiction or diſſimulation: and by this means your good ſhall be examined and more aſſured, and your ill ſhall be corrected and remedied; you ſhall be eaſed and ſtrengthened in your afflictions, and kept in order and regulated in your conſolations. Have a great confidence in him, mixt with a holy reverence, in ſuch manner, as that the reverence may not diminiſh the confidence, nor the confidence hinder the reverence. Confide in him with the reſpect of a daughter towards her father; reſpect him with the confidence of a ſon towards his mother. In a word, this friendſhip ought to be ſtrong and ſweet, all holy, all ſaintly, all divine, and all ſpiritual.

In order to this, chooſe one amongſt a thouſand, ſaith *Avila*; and I ſay, amongſt ten thouſand: for there are fewer than can be imagined, who are capable of this office. He muſt be full of charity, of knowledge, and of prudence; if any one of theſe three qualities be wanting in him, there is danger: but I ſay to you again, aſk him of God, and having obtained him, bleſs his Divine Majeſty, remain conſtant, and ſeek no others, but walk forward with ſincerity, humility, and confidence, for you ſhall make a moſt happy journey.

CHAP. V.

That we muſt begin with the Purifying of the Soul.

THE flowers have appeared in our land, (ſays the ſacred ſpouſe Cantic. ii. 12.) *the time of pruning is come.* What are the flowers of our hearts, O *Philothea,* but good deſires? Now as ſoon as they appear, the

the hand muſt be put to the pruning knife, to retrench from our conſcience all dead and ſuperfluous works. The alien maid, who was to marry with an *Iſraelite*, was to put off the garment of her captivity, to pare her nails, and to ſhave her hair. And the ſoul that aſpires to the honour of being ſpouſe to the Son of God, ought to put off the old man, and cloath herſelf with the new, forſaking ſin; and then to pare and ſhave away all manner of impediments, which turn her away from the love of God. The beginning of our health is to be purged from offenſive humours. S. *Paul* in a moment was cleanſed with a perfect purgation, ſo was S. *Catharine* of *Genoa*, S. *Mary Magdalen*, S. *Pelagia*, and ſome others: but this ſort of purgation is wholly miraculous and extraordinary in grace, as is the reſurrection of the dead in nature; and therefore we muſt not pretend to it. The ordinary purifying and healing, whether of the body or of the mind, is not affected but by little and little, by going on from degree to degree with pain and leiſure.

The angels upon *Jacob*'s ladder have wings, yet they fly not, but aſcend and deſcend in order from ſtep to ſtep. The ſoul, which riſes from ſin to devotion, is compared to the dawning of the day, which coming on drives not away the darkneſs in an inſtant, but by little and little. The cure, ſays the aphoriſm, which is made leiſurely, is ever the moſt aſſured. The diſeaſes of the heart, as well as thoſe of the body, come poſting on horſe-back, but depart on foot and ſlowly. Courage and patience then, O *Philothea*, are neceſſary in this enterpriſe. Alas! how much are thoſe ſouls to be pitied, who, ſeeing themſelves ſubject to many imperfections, after having for a while exerciſed themſelves in devotion, begin to be diſquieted, troubled and diſcouraged, ſuffering their hearts to be almoſt carried away with the temptation of forſaking all, and turning back

again.

But on the other ſide alſo are not thoſe ſouls in exceeding great danger, which by a contrary temptation make themſelves believe, that they are quite purified from their imperfections, the firſt day of their purgation; eſteeming themſelves perfect, being ſcarcely yet formed; and taking upon them to fly without wings! O *Philothea*, in what danger are they of relapſing, for taking themſelves too ſoon out of the phyſician's hands? Ha! *riſe not before light* (ſays the prophet, Pſ. cxxvi. 2.) *riſe after you have ſitten*; and he himſelf practiſing this leſſon, and having been already waſhed and cleanſed, deſires to be waſhed and cleanſed ſtill more, Pſ. l. 3.

The exerciſe of purifying the ſoul neither can nor ought to end but with our life: let us then not be diſturbed at ſeeing our imperfections, for our perfection conſiſts in fighting againſt them; and we cannot fight againſt them without ſeeing them, nor overcome them without encountering them. Our victory lies not in not feeling of them, but in not conſenting to them: now to be diſpleaſed with them, is not to conſent to them: nay, it cannot be otherwiſe, but that for the exerciſe of our humility, we ſhould ſometimes even meet with wounds in this ſpiritual warfare; but then we are never overcome, except we either loſe our life or our courage. Now imperfections, or venial ſins, cannot deprive us of our ſpiritual life; for that is not loſt, but by mortal ſin. It then only remains, that they make us not loſe courage: *Save me, O Lord*, ſaid David, *from puſillanimity of ſpirit, or cowardice and faint-heartedneſs*, Pſ. liv. It is a happy condition for us in this war, that we ſhall be always victorious, if we will but fight.

CHAP. VI.

Of the firſt purgation, which is that from all mortal ſins.

THE firſt purgation, which muſt be made, is that of ſin; the means to make it, is the holy ſa-

crament of penance. Seek the beſt confeſſor you are able; take in hand ſome one of the little books, which have been compoſed for the helping of conſciences to make a good confeſſion; ſuch as *Granada*, *Bruno*, *Arias*, or *Auger*; read them carefully, and obſerve from point to point in what you have offended, beginning from the time you came to the uſe of reaſon to the preſent hour. And if you diſtruſt your memory, write down what you have obſerved, and having ſo prepared and gathered together the bad humours of your conſcience, deteſt them, and renounce them by the greateſt contrition and ſorrow your heart can conceive; conſidering theſe four things; that by ſin you have loſt the grace of God; given up your part in heaven; choſen the eternal pains of hell; and renounced the eternal love of God. You ſee, *Philothea*, that I ſpeak of a general confeſſion of the whole life; which tho' I confeſs indeed not to be always abſolutely neceſſary, yet I look upon it as exceeding profitable to you in this beginning; and therefore I adviſe it extremely. It often happens, that the ordinary confeſſions of thoſe, who live a common and vulgar life, are full of great defects: for many times they prepare not themſelves at all, or very little; neither have they ſufficient contrition: nay, it too frequently falls out, that they go to confeſſion with a tacit will of returning to ſin, inaſmuch as they have not a will to avoid the occaſion of ſin, nor to make uſe of the means neceſſary for the amendment of life: and in all theſe caſes, a general confeſſion calls us to the knowlege of ourſelves, it ſtirs us up to a wholeſome confuſion for our life paſt; makes us admire the mercy of God, who has ſo patiently expected us: it appeaſes our hearts, quiets our minds, excites us to good reſolutions, gives occaſion to our ghoſtly father to preſcribe us advices more ſuitable to our condition, and opens our heart to declare ourſelves with more confidence in our following confeſſions.

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Speaking then of a general renewing of our heart, and of an universal conversion of our soul to God, by undertaking a devout life, it seems right to me, *Philothea*, to advise you to this general confession.

CHAP. VII.

*Of the second purgation, which is, that of the * affections to sin.*

ALL the *Israelites* departed in effect out of the land of *Egypt*, but they did not all depart in affection: wherefore in the wilderness many of them regretted their wanting the onions and flesh-pots of *Egypt*. So there are penitents, who in effect depart from sin, but yet leave not the affection to sin: that is, they propose to sin no more, but it is with a certain reluctancy of heart, to deprive themselves of, and to abstain from the unhappy delectations of sin. Their heart renounces sin, and avoids and removes away from it: but for all that, is often looking back that way, as *Lot*'s wife did towards *Sodom*. They abstain from sin, as sick men do from melons,

* To understand better what the Saint delivers in this chapter, with regard to the *affections to sin*, at which some have taken offence; we must distinguish two different acceptations of these words. For if by *affection to sin*, we understand the wilful *love*, or *desire of sin*, or a *voluntary complacency*, or *delight* in the thought of committing sin; 'tis certain, that in this sense an *affection* to *mortal sin*, is in itself a *mortal sin*. But the holy prelate does not take the *affection to sin* in this sense. He only means by the *affection to sin*, a certain propension and inclination to sin, contracted by a former evil habit; which is apt to remain in the soul (as a relick of the old leaven) after her conversion to God, and her reconciliation in the sacrament of penance; which though upon reflection the soul resists, is nevertheless of a very dangerous nature, if not diligently purged away, according to what the Saint here inculcates.

which they forbear to eat, becauſe the phyſician threatens them with death, if they eat them; but 'tis an uneaſineſs to them, to refrain from them: they talk of them, and are unwilling to believe them hurtful; they have at leaſt a mind to ſmell at them, and think thoſe happy who may eat them: ſo theſe weak and looſe penitents abſtain for ſome time from ſin, but it is with regret: they would be glad if they could ſin, and not be damned: they ſpeak of ſin with a certain feeling and reliſh, and think thoſe more at eaſe, who ſin. A man who was reſolved to revenge himſelf, ſhall change his mind in confeſſion; but ſoon after, you ſhall find him among his friends, taking pleaſure to ſpeak of his quarrel, and ſaying, *Had it it not been for the fear of God, he ſhould have done this or that: and that the divine law, in this article of forgiving is hard, and would to God it were allowed to revenge one's ſelf.* Ah! who does not ſee that altho' this poor man has gotten out of the ſin, yet he is quite entangled in the affection to it: and being out of *Egypt* in effect, he is there yet in inclination, longing after the garlick and onions he was wont to eat: as doth a woman, who having deteſted her impure loves, is pleaſed nevertheleſs with being courted and followed. Alas! in how great danger are all ſuch people?

O *Philothea*, ſince you deſire to undertake a devout Life, you muſt not only leave ſin, but you muſt alſo quite cleanſe your heart from all ſuch affections, as depend on ſin. For beſides the danger there would be of your relapſing into ſin, theſe wretched affections will perpetually weaken and weigh down your ſpirit; in ſuch manner as that it ſhall not be able to do good works readily, diligently and frequently, in which nevertheleſs conſiſts the very eſſence of devotion. Souls which being come out of the ſtate of ſin, ſtill retain theſe affections and weakneſſes, in my opinion, are like to maids in the green ſickneſs; they are not ſick, yet all their actions are ſick, they

eat

eat without reliſh, ſleep without reſt, laugh without joy, and rather draw themſelves along, than walk. For juſt ſo theſe ſouls do good; but with ſo great a ſpiritual heavineſs, that it takes away all the grace from their good exerciſes, which are few in number, and ſmall in effect.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the means to make this ſecond purgation.

NOW the firſt means and the foundation of this ſecond purgation, is a lively and ſtrong apprehenſion of the great evil which ſin brings upon us, by means of which we enter into a deep and vehement contrition. For as contrition, provided it be true, be it never ſo ſmall, eſpecially when joined with the virtue of the ſacrament, cleanſes us ſufficiently from the ſin; ſo when it is great and vehement, it cleanſes us from all the affections which depend upon the ſin. A weak hatred or rancor gives us an averſion to him we hate, and makes us fly his company: but if it be a mortal and violent hatred, we not only fly and abhor him to whom we bear it, but we even loath, and cannot endure the converſation of his kindred and friends, nor ſo much as his picture, or any thing that belongs to him. So when the penitent hates his ſin, only with a weak tho' true contrition, he reſolves indeed to ſin no more: but when he hates it with a powerful and vigorous contrition, he not only deteſts the ſin, but alſo all the affections, dependences, and occaſions which lead towards ſin. We muſt then, *Philothea*, enlarge our contrition and repentance, as much as we ſhall be able; to the end it may extend to the leaſt appurtenances of ſin. Thus *Magdalen*, in her converſion, loſt in ſuch manner the taſte of her ſins, and of the pleaſures ſhe had taken in them, as never to think of it any more. And *David* proteſted not only his own

abhorrence to ſin, but alſo to all the ways and paths that lead to it, Pſ. cxviii. 104. In this point conſiſts the ſoul's growing young again, which the ſame prophet compares to the renewing of the eagle, Pſ. ciii. 5.

Now to arrive at this apprehenſion and contrition, you muſt diligently exerciſe yourſelf in theſe following meditations: which being well practiſed, (by the help of God's grace) will root out of your heart both ſin, and the principal affections of ſin; and indeed, I have drawn them up purely for this end, you ſhall make them one after another, in the order I have placed them, taking but one for each day (and that if poſſible in the morning,) which is the moſt proper time for all ſpiritual exerciſes, and ſhall endevour to recal them to mind, and ruminate on them the reſt of the day. But if you are not yet accuſtomed to make meditation, ſee that which ſhall be ſaid on this ſubject in the ſecond part.

CHAP. IX.

The firſt meditation. On our creation.

Preparation, 1. Place yourſelf in the preſence of God. 2. Beſeech him to inſpire you.

Conſiderations.

1. CONSIDER, that ſo many years ago you were not yet in the world, and that your being was a mere nothing. Where were we, O my ſoul, at that time? The world had then laſted ſo long, and there was no news at all of us.

2. God has brought you out of this nothing, to make you what you are, merely of his own goodneſs, having no need at all of you.

3. Conſider the being that God has given you; for it is the chieſeſt in this viſible world, capable of eternal

eternal life, and of being perfectly united with his divine Majesty.

Affections and Resolutions.

1. *Humble yourself profoundly before God, saying from your heart, with the Psalmist:* Ps. xxxviii. 6. *My substance* (my whole being) *is as nothing before thee,* O Lord, and how hadst thou remembrance of me, to create me? Alas! my soul, thou wast ingulfed in that ancient nothing, and hadst yet been there, had not God drawn thee thence: and what couldst thou have done remaining in that nothing?

2. *Give thanks to God.* O my great and good Creator, how am I obliged to thee, since thou hast vouchafed to take me out of this my nothing, and by thy mercy to make me what I am! What can I ever do to bless thy holy name worthily, and to render due thanks to thy ineffimable goodness?

3. *Confound yourself.* But, alas! my Creator, instead of uniting myself to thee by love and service, I have made myself a rebel by my disorderly affections, separating myself, and going far away from thee to unite myself to sin; honouring thy goodness no more, than if thou hadst not been my Creator.

4. *Cast yourself down before God.* O my soul, know that the Lord is thy God: it is he that has made thee, and not thou thyself. O God, I am the work of thy hands.

I will then no more henceforth take a complaceney in myself, since of myself I am nothing. What hast thou to glory in, O dust and ashes? Yea rather, O very nothing, what hast thou to be proud of? To humble therefore myself, I resolve to do such and such things, to suffer such and such contempts. I will change my life, henceforth follow my Creator, and esteem myself honoured with the condition of this being, which he has given me, employing it entirely in the obedience to his will, by

such means as shall be taught me, and of which I shall enquire of my ghostly father.

Conclusion.

1. *Give thanks to God.* Bless thy God, O my soul, and let all that is within me praise his holy name, for his goodness has drawn me out of nothing, and his mercy has created me.

2. *Offer.* O my God, I offer to thee the being which thou hast given me; with my whole heart I dedicate and consecrate it to thee.

3. *Pray.* O God, strengthen me in these affections and resolutions. O holy virgin *Mary* recommend them to the mercy of thy Son, with all those for whom I ought to pray, &c. *Pater. Ave. Credo.*

In going out from your prayer, walk a little while, and gather a little nosegay of devotion out of the considerations, which you have made, to smell to all the rest of the day.

CHAP. X.

2. *Meditation. On the end for which we were created.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourself before God. 2. Beseech him to inspire you.

Considerations.

1. GOD has not placed you in this world for any need he had of you, who are altogether unprofitable to him, but only to exercise his goodness in you, by giving you his grace and his glory. And for this end he hath given you an understanding to know him; a memory to remember him; a will to love him; an imagination to represent to yourself his benefits; eyes to behold the Wonders of his works; a tongue to praise him; and so of the other faculties.

2. Being created, and brought into the world for this intention, all actions contrary to it are to be rejected

rejected and avoided; and thoſe which are of no ſervice to this end, ought to be contemned as vain and ſuperfluous.

3. Conſider the unhappineſs of the world which never thinks of this, but lives as tho' they believed themſelves created to no other end, than to build houſes, to plant trees, to heap up riches, and to amuſe themſelves with fooleries.

Affections and Reſolutions.

1. *Confound yourſelf, reproaching your ſoul with her miſery, which has been hitherto ſo great, as ſeldom or never to think of all this.* Alas! ſhall you ſay, what was I thinking of, O my God, when I was not thinking of thee? What did I remember, when I forgot thee? What did I love, when I loved not thee? Alas! I ought to have fed upon truth, and I filled myſelf with vanity, I ſerved the world, which was only created to ſerve me.

2. *Deteſt your paſt life.* I renounce you, O vain thoughts and unprofitable amuſements: I abjure you O hateful and frivolous remembrances: I abhor you, O unfaithful and diſloyal friendſhips, ſervices quite loſt and miſerable, ungrateful gratifications, and irkſome ſatisfactions.

3. *Return yourſelf to God.* And thou, O my God, my Saviour, thou ſhalt be henceforth the ſole object of my thoughts; I will no more apply my mind to amuſements which may be diſpleaſing to thee. My memory ſhall fill itſelf all the days of my life with the greatneſs of thy clemency ſo ſweetly exerciſed on me: thou ſhalt be the delight of my heart, and the ſwetneſs of my affections.

Ah! then ſuch and ſuch traſh and fooleries to which I apply'd myſelf! ſuch and ſuch vain exerciſes, in which I employed my days; ſuch and ſuch affections, which engaged my heart, ſhall henceforth be the object of my horror; and to this intention I will uſe ſuch and ſuch remedies.

Conclusion.

1. *Thank God, who has made you for so excellent an end.* Thou hast made me, O Lord, for thyself, and for an eternal enjoyment of the immensity of thy glory: O when shall I be worthy of it! when shall I bless thee according to my duty?

2. *Offer.* I offer to thee, O my dear Creator, all these affections and resolutions, with all my heart and my soul.

3. *Pray.* I beseech thee, O God, to accept these my desires and wishes, and to give thy holy benediction to my soul, to the end that it may be able to accomplish them, through the merits of thy blessed Son's blood shed upon the cross, &c. *Make a little vesegay of devotion.*

CHAP. XI.

3. *Meditation. On the benefits of God.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourself in the presence of God. 2. Beseech him to inspire you.

Considerations.

1. CONsider the corporal benefits, which God has bestowed on you; what a body he has given you, what conveniences to maintain it, what health what lawful comforts for its use, what friends, what assistances. But consider all this with respect to so many other persons, more worthy than yourself, who are destitute of these blessings; some disabled in their bodies, their health, or their limbs; others abandoned to the mercy of reproaches, contempt, and dishonour; others opressed with poverty; and God has not suffered you to be so miserable.

2. Consider the gifts of mind. How many are there in the world, stupid, senseless or mad? and why are not you of this number? God has favoured you. How many are there, who have been brought

up

up rudely, and in extreme ignorance? and by God's providence you have been educated liberally and honourably.

3. Consider the spiritual graces, O *Philothea*; you are a child of the Church; God has taught you to know him from your childhood. How often has he given you his sacraments? How often good inspirations, internal illuminations and reprehensions for your amendment? How many times has he pardoned you your faults? How often has he delivered you from the occasions of being lost for ever, to which you were exposed? And were not these years past all given you as a time and opportunity for your advancement forward to the good of your soul? Consider a little by descending to particulars, how sweet and gracious God has been to you.

Affections and Resolutions.

1. *Admire the goodness of God.* O how good is my God to me! O how good indeed! How rich is thy heart, O Lord, in mercy, and liberal in clemency! O my soul, let us recount for ever, how many favours he has done us.

2. *Wonder at your ingratitude.* But what am I, O Lord, that thou hast been mindful of me! Ah, how great is my unworthiness! Alas, I have trodden thy blessings under foot! I have dishonoured thy graces, perverting them to the abuse and contempt of thy sovereign goodness. I have opposed the abyss of my ingratitude to the abyss of thy bounty and favours.

3. *Stir yourself up to make an acknowledgment.* Well then, O my heart, resolve thou to be now no more unfaithful, ungrateful, and disloyal to this great benefactor. And how shall not my soul henceforth be wholly subject to God, who has wrought so many wonders and graces in me, and for me?

4. Ah! withdraw then your body, *Philothea*, from such and such sensual pleasures; and subject it to the service of God, who has done so much for it. Apply

your ſoul to know and acknowledge him by ſuch and ſuch exerciſes, as are requiſite for that purpoſe. Employ diligently the means which are in the church to help you to ſave yourſelf, and to love God. Yes, O my God, I will frequent prayer and the ſacraments, I will hear thy holy word, and put in practice thy inſpirations and counſels.

Concluſion.

1. Thank God for the knowledge he hath now given you of your duty, and for all the benefits hitherto received.

2. Offer him your heart with all your reſolutions.

3. Pray him that he will ſtrengthen you to practiſe them faithfully, through the merits of his Son's death: implore the interceſſion of the bleſſed Virgin, and of the Saints. *Pater. Ave.*

Make a little ſpiritual noſegay.

CHAP. XII.

4. *Meditation. On ſin.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourſelf in the preſence of God. 2. Beſeech him to inſpire you.

Conſiderations.

1. CALL to mind, how long it is ſince you began to ſin, and ſee how much, ſince that beginning, ſins have been multiplied in your heart. How every day you have increaſed their number againſt God, againſt yourſelf, and againſt your neighbour, by work, by word, or by deſires and thoughts.

2. Conſider your evil inclinations, and how far you have followed them: and by theſe two points you ſhall find, that your ſins are more numerous than the hairs of your head, yea than the ſands of the ſea.

3. Conſider in particular the ſin of ingratitude againſt God, which is a general ſin, which extends itſelf over all the reſt, and makes them infinitely more

enormous

enormous. See then, how many benefits God has beſtowed on you, and how you have abuſed them all againſt the giver: in particular, how many inſpirations you have deſpiſed; how many good motions you have rendered unprofitable; and above all, how many times you have received the ſacraments, and where are the fruits of them? What is become of thoſe precious jewels with which your dear Spouſe has adorned you? All theſe have been buried under your iniquities. With what preparation have you received them? Think on this ingratitude; that God having run ſo much after you, to ſave you, you have run always from him to loſe yourſelf.

Affections and Reſolutions.

1. *Be confounded at your miſery.* O my God, how dare I appear before thine eyes? Alas! I am but the corruption of the world, and a very ſink of ingratitude and iniquity. Is it poſſible, that I ſhould have been ſo diſloyal, as not to have left any one of my ſenſes, nor any one of the powers of my ſoul, which I have not corrupted, violated and defiled; and that not ſo much as one day of my life has paſſed, in which I have not brought forth ſuch wicked effects? Is this the return I ought to make for the benefits of my Creator, and the blood of my Redeemer?

2. Crave pardon; and caſt yourſelf at the feet of our Lord like a prodigal child, like a *Magdalen*, or like a woman that has defiled her marriage-bed with all kind of adultery. Mercy, O Lord, upon this poor ſinner! Alas, O living fountain of compaſſion, have pity on this wretch.

3. *Reſolve to live better.* No, O Lord, never more, with the help of thy grace, never more will I abandon myſelf to ſin. Alas, I have loved it too much; I deteſt it now, and I embrace thee; O Father of mercy, I reſolve to live and die in thee.

4. To efface my ſins paſt, I will accuſe myſelf of them courageouſly, and will not ſuffer one of them

to ſtay behind; I will caſt them all out of my ſoul.

5. I will uſe all poſſible endeavours, to root out entirely the plants of them from my heart, and in particular of ſuch and ſuch, which annoy me moſt.

6. To accompliſh this, I will conſtantly embrace the means which ſhall be adviſed me, and will think I have never done enough to repair ſo grievous offences.

Concluſion.

1. Give God thanks, for waiting for you till this hour, and bleſs him that he has given you theſe good affections.

2. Offer him up your heart, that you may put them in execution.

3. Deſire him to ſtrengthen you, &c.

CHAP. XIII.

5. *Meditation. On death.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourſelf in the preſence of God. 2. Beg his grace. Imagine yourſelf to be in extremity of ſickneſs, lying on your death-bed, without any hope of eſcaping.

Conſiderations.

1. CONSIDER the uncertainty of the day of your death. O my ſoul, thou ſhalt depart one day out of this body: but when ſhall it be? ſhall it be in winter, or in ſummer? in city, or in country? by day, or night? ſhall it be ſuddenly, or with notice? by ſickneſs, or by accident? ſhalt thou have leiſure to confeſs thee or not? ſhalt thou be aſſiſted by thy confeſſarius and ghoſtly father? Alas! of all this we know nothing at all: only certain it is, that we ſhall die, and always ſooner than we think.

2. Conſider, that then the world ſhall end in regard of you; for it ſhall laſt no longer to you, it

ſhall

ſhall turn upſide down before your eyes: for then its pleaſures, vanities, worldly joys, and vain affections ſhall ſeem to us like empty ſhadows and airy clouds. Ah! wretch! for what toys and lying follies have I offended my God? You ſhall then ſee, that for a mere nothing we have forſaken God. On the other hand, devotion and good works will then ſeem to you ſo lovely and ſweet. O why did I not follow this fair and pleaſant path? Then the ſins, which before ſeemed very little, will appear as big as mountains, and your devotion very ſmall.

3. Conſider the long and languiſhing farewels your ſoul ſhall then give to this poor world: ſhe ſhall then bid adieu to riches, vanities, and vain company; to pleaſures, paſtimes, friends and neighbours; to kindred, children, huſband and wife; in a word, to every creature; and finally to her own body, which ſhe ſhall leave pale, ghaſtly, hideous, and loathſome.

4. Conſider with what hurrying they ſhall carry off this body, to bury it under the earth: which done, the world will ſcarce think any more of you, nor remember you any more than you have done others. God's peace be with him, ſhall they ſay, and that's all: O death, how little art thou regarded! how little art thou pitied!

5. Conſider how the ſoul, being departed from the body, takes her way to the right hand or to the left. Alas! whither ſhall your's go? What way ſhall it take? No other than that which it begun here in this world.

Affections and Reſolutions.

1. *Pray to God, and caſt yourſelf into his Arms.* Ah! Lord, receive me into thy protection at that dreadful day: make that hour happy and favourable unto me: and rather let all the others of my life be ſad and ſorrowful.

2. De-

2. *Deſpiſe the world.* Seeing I know not the hour in which I muſt leave thee, O world, I will no more ſet my heart on thee. O my dear friends, O my dear relations, give me leave to love you now no more but with an holy friendſhip, which may laſt eternally: for why ſhould I unite myſelf to you in ſuch manner as that the knot muſt be diſſolved and broken aſunder?'

I will then prepare myſelf for that hour, and take all the care required to make this paſſage happily: I will ſecure the ſtate of my conſcience to the beſt of my power, and will take preſent order for rectifying ſuch and ſuch defects.

Concluſion.

Give thanks to God for theſe reſolutions, which he has given you: offer them to his Majeſty: beg of him again and again to make your death happy, by the merit of the death of his Son: implore the aſſiſtance of the bleſſed Virgin and the Saints. *Pater. Ave. Credo. Make a noſegay of Myrrh.*

CHAP. XIV.

6. *Meditation. On judgment.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourſelf before God. 2. Beſeech him to inſpire you.

Conſiderations.

1. AFTER the time that God hath preſcribed for the duration of this world; and after many dreadful ſigns, and preſages, which ſhall cauſe men to wither away for fear and apprehenſion; a fire, coming like a deluge, ſhall burn and reduce to aſhes the whole face of the earth; not one of the things we ſee upon it, ſhall be ſpared.

2. After this deluge of flames and of thunder-bolts,

bolts, all men ſhall riſe from the earth, (excepting ſuch as are already riſen) and at the voice of the Arch-angel they ſhall all appear in the valley of *Joſophat.* But alas, with what difference! for the one ſort ſhall be there in glorious and reſplendent bodies; the others, in bodies moſt hideous and frightful.

3. Conſider the majeſty with which the Sovereign Judge will appear, ſurrounded with all the Angels and Saints; having before him his Croſs, ſhining much brighter than the ſun; an enſign of favour to the good, and of rigour to the wicked.

4. This Sovereign Judge by his awful command, which ſhall be ſuddenly executed, ſhall ſeparate the good from the bad, placing the one at his right hand, and the other at his left. O everlaſting ſeparation! after which theſe two bands ſhall never more be together.

5. This ſeparation being made, and the books of conſciences being opened, all ſhall clearly ſee the malice of the wicked, and the contempt which they have ſhewed againſt God; and on the other ſide, the penitence of the good, and the effects of God's grace which they have received; and nothing ſhall be hid. O good God, what a confuſion will this be to the one, and what a conſolation to the other!

6. Conſider the laſt ſentence of the wicked: *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.* Ponder well theſe weighty words. *Depart*, ſaith he, *from me.* A word of God's abandoning for ever thoſe miſerable wretches, baniſhing them for all eternity from his preſence. He calls them *curſed:* O my ſoul what a curſe! a general curſe, which comprizes all evils; an irrevocable curſe, which comprizes all times, and eternity. He adds, *into everlaſting fire:* behold, O my heart, this vaſt eternity: O eternal eternity of pains, how dreadful art thou!

7. Con-

7. Consider the contrary sentence of the good. *Come*, saith the Judge: O the sweet word of salvation, by which God draws us to himself, and receives us into the bosom of his goodness! *Ye blessed of my Father*: O dear blessing, which comprizes all blessings! *possess the kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world*: O good God, what bounty! for this kingdom shall never have an end.

Affections and resolutions.

1. *Tremble, O my soul, at the remembrance of these things.* O my God, who can secure me against that day, in which the pillars of Heaven shall tremble for fear!

2. Detest your sins, which only can condemn you in that dreadful day.

Ah! then, I will judge myself now, that I may not be judged; I resolve to examine my conscience, and to condemn myself; I will accuse myself and amend my life, that the great Judge may not condemn me in that dreadful day. I will therefore confess, I will accept of all necessary advices, &c.

Conclusion.

Thank God, who has given you means to provide for your security at that day, and time to do penance.

Offer him your heart to do it.

Beg of him to give you the grace duly to accomplish it. *Pater. Ave.*

Make your spiritual nosegay.

CHAP. XV.

7. *Meditation. On hell.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourself in the presence of God. 2. Humble yourself, and implore his assistance.

nce. 3. Repreſent to yourſelf a dark city all burning, with brimſtone and ſtinking pitch, and full of inhabitants who cannot get out.

Conſiderations.

1. THE damned are in the abyſs of hell, as within this unfortunate city, where they ſuffer unſpeakable torments in all their ſenſes and in all their members; becauſe, as they have employed all their ſenſes and their members in ſinning, ſo ſhall they ſuffer in all their ſenſes the pains which are due to ſin. The eyes, for their wicked and laſcivious looks, ſhall ſuffer the horrible ſight of devils and of hell. The ears, for taking delight in vicious diſcourſes, ſhall hear nothing but wailings, lamentations, and cries of deſpair: and ſo of the others.

2. Beſides all theſe torments, there is yet another greater, which is the privation and loſs of the glory of God, from the ſight of which they are excluded for ever. Now if *Abſalom* found that the privation of the amiable face of his father *David* was more grievous to him than his baniſhment; good God, what a grief will it be, to be for ever excluded from beholding thy moſt ſweet and gracious countenance!

3. Conſider, above all, the eternity of theſe pains, which alone makes hell inſupportable. Alas! if a flea in your ear, or if the heat of a little fever makes one ſhort night ſo long and tedious, how terrible will the night of eternity be, accompanied with ſo many torments! From this eternity proceeds an eternal deſpair, infinite blaſphemies and rage.

Affections and reſolutions.

Terrify your ſoul with the words of the prophet Iſaias. Ch. xxxiii. 14. O my ſoul, art thou able to *dwell with* this *devouring fire?* canſt thou endure to *dwell*

with everlasting burnings? canst thou think of parting with thy God for ever?

Confess that you have deserved it, yea oftentimes. But O from henceforth I will take a new course; for why should I go down into this bottomless pit? I will use such and such endeavours to avoid sin, which alone can bring me to this eternal death. *Give thanks, offer, pray.*

CHAP. XVI.

8. *Meditation. On heaven.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourself in the presence of God. 2. Call him to your assistance.

Considerations.

1. CONSIDER a fair and very clear night, and think how delightful it is to behold the sky with all that multitude and variety of stars: then join this beauty with that of as fine a day, so as the brightness of the sun may no ways hinder the clear sight of the stars nor of the moon; and then say boldly, that all this beauty put together is nothing in comparison with the excellence of the great heavenly paradise. O how lovely, how desirable is this place! O how precious is this city!

2. Consider the nobility, the beauty, and the multitude of the inhabitants of this happy country; these millions of millions of angels, of cherubims, and seraphims; this troop of apostles, of prophets, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins, and of holy matrons: the multitude is innumerable. O how glorious is this company! the least of them all is more beautiful to behold than all the world: what then will it be to see them all? But O my God, how happy are they! they always sing the sweet song of eternal Love; they always

always enjoy a conſtant mirth, they mutually give one another unſpeakable contentments, and live in the conſolation of a happy indiſſoluble ſociety.

3. In fine, conſider how bleſſed they are, in the enjoyment of God, who favours them for ever with his lovely ſight, and by the ſame infuſes into their hearts an ocean of delights. How great a happineſs it is to be united everlaſtingly to their firſt principle, their ſovereign good! They are there like happy birds, flying, and ſinging perpetually in the air of his divinity, which encompaſſes them on all ſides with incredible pleaſures. There every one does his beſt, and without envy ſings the praiſes of his Creator. Bleſſed be thou for ever, O ſweet and ſovereign Creator and Saviour, who art ſo good to us, and doſt communicate ſo liberally thy glory to us. And God reciprocally bleſſes all his ſaints with an eternal benediction. Bleſſed be you for ever, ſays he, my beloved creatures, who have ſerved me, and who ſhall praiſe me eternally with ſo great love and courage.

Affections and reſolutions.

1. *Admire and praiſe this heavenly country.* O how beautiful art thou my dear Jeruſalem! and how happy are thy inhabitants!

2. *Reproach your heart with the little courage it has had hitherto, in turning ſo far out of the way to this glorious habitation.* O why have I gone to ſo great a diſtance from my ſovereign happineſs? Ah! wretch that I am, for theſe falſe and trifling pleaſures, have I a thouſand and a thouſand times turned my back upon theſe eternal and infinite delights; where was, my judgment to deſpiſe the good things (of the land of the living) that are ſo lovely and deſirable, for the ſake of deſires that are ſo vain and contemptible!

3. *Aſpire, notwithſtanding, with all earneſtneſs to this moſt delightful abode.* O my good and ſovereign Lord, ſince it has pleaſed thee to bring back my ſteps into

into thy ways, never more will I turn away from them. Come O my dear ſoul, come, let us go into this reſt without end; let us walk towards this bleſſed land, which is promiſed us: what do we in this *Egypt?* I will therefore diſburden myſelf of all ſuch things as may divert or retard me in this way; I will perform ſuch and ſuch things as may conduct me thither. *Give thanks, offer, pray.*

CHAP. XVII.

9. *Meditation. By way of election, and choice of heaven.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourſelf in the preſence of God. 2. Humble yourſelf before him, beſeeching him to inſpire you. 3. Imagine yourſelf to be in a plain field, alone with your good Angel, as young *Tobias* going to *Rages*, and that he ſhews you above heaven open, with all the pleaſures repreſented in the meditation you have made of heaven: then that he ſhews you below, hell open; with all the torments deſcribed in the meditation of hell: you being thus placed in imagination, and kneeling before your good Angel.

Conſiderations.

1. CONSIDER, that it is very true, that you are between heaven and hell; and that the one and the other is open to receive you, according to the choice which you ſhall make.

2. Conſider that the choice which we make of the one or of the other in this world, ſhall laſt for all eternity in the world to come.

3. And though both the one and the other be open to receive you, according to the choice you ſhall make, yet God, who is ready to give you either the one by his juſtice, or the other by his mercy, deſires never-

nevertheleſs with an incomparable deſire, that you would make choice of heaven; and your good Angel alſo preſſes you to it with all his power, offering you on God's behalf a thouſand graces, and a thouſand aſſiſtances to help you up thither.

4. Jeſus Chriſt from heaven above looks down upon you in his goodneſs, and ſweetly invites you; Come, O my dear ſoul, to everlaſting reſt, within the arms of my goodneſs, where I have prepared immortal delights for thee in the abundance of my love. Behold with your inward eyes, the holy Virgin who calls upon you as a mother; Courage, my child, deſpiſe not the deſires of my Son, nor ſo many ſighs which I caſt forth for thee, longing with him for thy eternal ſalvation. Behold the Saints who exhort you, and a million of holy ſouls who ſweetly invite you, wiſhing for nothing more than to ſee one day your heart united with theirs to praiſe God for evermore; and aſſuring you that the way to heaven is not ſo difficult as the world makes it. Be of good heart, dearly beloved friend, ſay they all to you, whoſoever ſhall diligently conſider the path of devotion, by which we aſcended hither, ſhall ſee that we came to thoſe joys by delights incomparably more ſweet than thoſe of the world.

Election.

1. O hell, I deteſt thee now and for evermore: I deteſt thy torments and thy pains; I deteſt thy wretched and miſerable eternity; and above all, I deteſt thoſe eternal blaſphemies and maledictions, which thou vomiteſt out eternally againſt my God. And turning my heart and my ſoul towards thee, O beautiful heavenly paradiſe, everlaſting glory, and endleſs felicity, I chooſe for always and irrevocably my abode and my habitation within thy fair and ſacred dwelling, within thy holy and moſt lovely tabernacles. I bleſs thy mercy, O my God, and I accept of

the

the offer which it pleaſeth thee to make me of it. O Jeſus my Saviour, I accept thy everlaſting love, and claim the purchaſe thou haſt made for me of a place and a lodging in this bleſſed *Jeruſalem*, not ſo much for any other thing, as to love and bleſs thee for ever and ever.

2. Accept the favours which the bleſſed Virgin and the Saints preſent you. Promiſe them to make the beſt of your way to join their company; and give your hand to your good Angel, that he may conduct you thither: encourage your ſoul to make this choice.

CHAP XVIII.

10. *Meditation. By way of election, and choice which the ſoul makes of a devout life.*

Preparation. 1. Place yourſelf in the preſence of God. 2. Humble yourſelf before him, and implore his aſſiſtance.

Conſiderations.

1. IMAGINE yourſelf again to be in a plain field, alone with your good Angel; and that on your left hand you ſee the devil ſeated on a great high throne attended with many helliſh ſpirits, and all round him a great troop of worldings, who all bare-headed acknowledge him, and do him homage, ſome by one ſin and ſome by another. Obſerve the behaviour of all the wretched courtiers of this abominable king. Behold ſome of them tranſported with hatred, envy, and rage; others killing one another; others waſted with cares and anxious to heap up riches; others attentive to vanity, without any manner of pleaſure which is not idle and vain; others all filthy; buried and quite putrified in their brutiſh affections. Behold how there is no reſt, no order, no decency amongſt

amongſt them. Behold how they deſpiſe one another, and how they only love in ſhow. In ſhort, you ſhall ſee a wretched common-wealth tyrannized over by this curſed king, which will move you to compaſſion.

2. On the right hand of you behold Jeſus Chriſt crucified, who with a cordial love prays for theſe poor people poſſeſſed by the devil, that they may be freed from his tyranny; and who calls them to himſelf: behold round about him a great troop of devout perſons with their angels. Contemplate the beauty of this kingdom of devotion. O what a ſight is it to ſee this troop of virgins, men, and women, whiter than the lilies; this aſſembly of widows, full of a holy mortification and humility! ſee the company of many married people who live ſo meekly together with a mutual reſpect, which cannot be without a great charity. Behold how theſe devout ſouls join the care of their exteriour houſe with the care of the interiour, the love of the huſband or wife with that of the heavenly Spouſe. Conſider them all univerſally, and you ſhall ſee them all in a holy, ſweet, and lovely order, attending to our Lord, whom every one would willingly plant in the midſt of his heart. They are joyful, but 'tis with a comely, charitable, and well-ordered joy: they love one another; but their love is moſt holy and pure. Such as are under afflictions amongſt theſe devout people, do not torment themſelves much, nor do they loſe courage. To conclude, ſee the eyes of our Saviour who comforts them, and how all of them unanimouſly aſpire to him.

3. You have already left Satan, with all his ſad and wretched troop, by the good affections you have conceived; nevertheleſs you are not yet arrived at your King Jeſus, nor united with his bleſſed and holy company of devout people, but have been hitherto between the one and the other.

4. The bleſſed Virgin, with St. *Joſeph*, St. *Lewis*, St. *Monica*, and a hundred thouſand others, who

are in the ſquadron of thoſe that have lived in the midſt of the world, invite you and encourage you.

5. The crucified King calls you by your own name; Come, O my well beloved, come that I may crown thee.

Election.

1. O world! O abominable troop! no, never ſhall you ſee me under your banner. I have for ever left off your fooleries and vanities. O king of pride, O king of woe, infernal ſpirit, I renounce thee with all thy vain pomps, I deteſt thee with all thy works.

2. And turning myſelf to thee, my ſweet Jeſus, King of happineſs and eternal glory, I embrace thee with all the powers of my ſoul, I adore thee with all my heart, I chooſe thee now and ever for my king, and for my only ſovereign; I offer thee my inviolable fidelity; I pay thee irrevocable homage, and ſubmit myſelf to the obedience of thy holy laws and ordinances.

3. O ſacred Virgin, my dear Lady, I chuſe thee for my guide, I put myſelf under thy colours, I offer thee a particular reſpect and ſpecial reverence.

4. O my good Angel, preſent me to this ſacred aſſembly, never forſake me till I am aſſociated with this bleſſed company, with whom I ſay and will ſay for ever, in teſtimony of my choice, Live Jeſus, live Jeſus.

CHAP. XIX.

How to make a general confeſſion.

1. BEHOLD here then, my dear *Philothea*, the meditations requiſite for our purpoſe; when you ſhall have made them all, go courageouſly in the ſpirit of humility to make your general confeſſion: but pray ſuffer not yourſelf to be troubled with any kind of

of apprehenſion. The ſcorpion which has ſtung us, is venomous in ſtinging us, but being reduced into oil, becomes a ſovereign remedy againſt its own ſting. Sin is only ſhameful when we commit it; but being converted into confeſſion and penance, it is honourable and wholeſome: contrition and confeſſion are ſo beautiful and ſo odoriferous, that they efface the uglineſs, and diſperſe the ſtench of ſin. *Simon* the leper ſaid that *Magdalen* was a ſinner; but our Lord ſaid no, and he ſpoke only of the ſweet perfumes ſhe poured forth, and of the greatneſs of her love. If we be very humble, O *Philothea*, our ſins will infinitely diſpleaſe us, becauſe God is offended by them; but the accuſation of our ſins will be ſweet and agreeable to us, becauſe God is honoured by it: it is a kind of an eaſe to us to acquaint the phyſician rightly with the evil that torments us.

When you ſhall be come before your ghoſtly father, imagine yourſelf to be on mount *Calvary*, under the feet of Jeſus Chriſt crucified, whoſe precious blood diſtills on all ſides to waſh you from your iniquities. For though it be not the very blood of our Saviour, yet it is the merit of his blood ſhed for us, which waters abundantly the ſouls of the penitents in the confeſſion ſeats. Open then well your heart that you may caſt out your ſins by confeſſion; for as faſt as they ſhall go out, the precious merits of his divine paſſion will enter in, to fill it with bleſſings.

But be ſure to declare all, ſincerely and plainly. Fully ſatisfy your conſcience in this, once for all; which done, then hearken to the admonitions and ordinances of the ſervant of God, and ſay in your heart; *Speak Lord, for thy ſervant heareth thee:* 1 *Sam.* iii. 9. Yea, *Philothea*, it is God whom you hear; ſince he has ſaid to his vicegerents, *he that heareth you, heareth me*, S. *Luke* x. 16.

After that, take in hand the following proteſtation, which ſerves for a concluſion of all your contrition, and which you ought firſt to have meditated on and

conſidered. Read it attentively, and with the greateſt feeling you can poſſibly.

CHAP. XX.

An authentic proteſtation, to engrave in the ſoul the reſolution to ſerve God, and to conclude the acts of penance.

I Underwritten, placed here in the preſence of the eternal God, and of all the court of heaven, having conſidered the exceeding great mercy of his divine goodneſs towards me a moſt unworthy and wretched creature, whom he has created of nothing, preſerved, ſupported and delivered from ſo many dangers, and loaded with ſo many benefits: but above all, having conſidered the incomprehenſible ſweetneſs and clemency with which this moſt good God has ſo graciouſly borne with me in my iniquities; ſo frequently and ſo lovingly inſpired me, inviting me to amendment; and ſo patiently waited for my repentance and converſion until this N. year of my age, notwithſtanding all my ingratitudes, diſloyalties and infidelities, by which deferring my converſion from day to day, and deſpiſing his graces, I have ſo unadviſedly offended him: Having moreover conſidered, that upon the day of my holy baptiſm I was ſo happily and holily vowed and dedicated to my God, to be his child, and that contrary to the profeſſion which was then made in my name, I have ſo much and ſo many times ſo unhappily and deteſtably profaned and violated my mind, applying and employing it againſt the divine majeſty: In fine, returning now to myſelf, proſtrate, in heart and ſpirit before the throne of the divine juſtice, I acknowledge, avow and confeſs myſelf lawfully attainted and convicted of high treaſon againſt God, and guilty of the death and paſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, by reaſon of the ſins I have committed, for which he has died and has ſuffered the torment of the croſs; ſo

that,

that, conſequently, I deſerve to be caſt away, and damned for ever.

But turning myſelf towards the throne of the infinite mercy of the ſame eternal God, after having deteſted with my whole heart, and with all my power, the iniquities of my paſt life, I moſt humbly beg and crave pardon, grace and mercy, with intire abſolution from my crimes, by virtue of the death and paſſion of this ſame Lord and Redeemer of my ſoul: on which relying, as on the only foundation of my hope, I confirm again and renew the ſacred profeſſion of allegiance made in my behalf to my God at my baptiſm; renouncing the devil, the world and the fleſh, deteſting their unhappy ſuggeſtions, vanities and concupiſcences, for all the time of my preſent life, and for all eternity. And converting myſelf unto my moſt gracious and merciful God, I deſire, purpoſe, deliberate, and irrevocably reſolve to ſerve him and love him now and for ever: And to this end, I give, dedicate and conſecrate to him my ſpirit with all its faculties, my ſoul with all its powers, my heart with all its affections, and my body with all its ſenſes; proteſting that I will never more abuſe any part of my being againſt his divine will and ſovereign majeſty; to whom I offer up and ſacrifice myſelf in ſpirit, to be for ever-more loyal, obedient, and faithful to him, without ever revoking, or repenting me of this my act and deed.

But if, alas! by the ſuggeſtion of the enemy, or by ſome human frailty I ſhould come to tranſgreſs, in any thing whatſoever, this my reſolution and dedication of myſelf, I proteſt from this very hour, and determine, by the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, to riſe again ſo ſoon as I ſhall perceive my fall, and to return anew to the divine mercy, without any delay or protraction whatſoever. This is my will, my intention, and my reſolution, inviolable and irrevocable, which I declare and confirm without reſervation or excepti-

on, in the ſame ſacred preſence of my God, and in the ſight of the triumphant church, and in the face of the church militant my mother, which hears this my declaration in the perſon of him who, as her officer, hears me in this action.

May it pleaſe thee, O my God eternal, almighty and all-gracious, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to confirm in me this reſolution, and to accept this my cordial and inward ſacrifice in the odour of ſweetneſs. And as it hath pleaſed thee to give me the inſpiration and will to do this, ſo grant me the ſtrength and grace to perform it. O my God, thou art my God, the God of my heart, the God of my ſoul, and the God of my mind; as ſuch I acknowledge thee, and adore thee now and for all eternity. Live O Jeſu.

CHAP. XXI.

The concluſion for this firſt purgation.

THIS proteſtation being made, be attentive and open the ears of your heart to hear in ſpirit the words of your abſolution, which the Saviour of your ſoul himſelf ſeated on the throne of his mercy, will pronounce above in heaven before all the angels and ſaints; at the ſame time as the prieſt in his name abſolves you here below upon earth: ſo that all this company of the bleſſed, rejoicing at this your happineſs, will ſing a ſpiritual canticle with incomparable joy, and all of them will give the kiſs of peace and fellowſhip to your heart, now reſtored to grace and ſanctity.

Good God! *Philothea*, what an admirable contract is here, by which you make ſo happy a treaty with the divine Majeſty, that by giving yourſelf to him, you gain him and yourſelf too for an eternal life. Nothing more remains, but that you ſhould take your pen in hand, and ſign with a good heart the act of your proteſtation, and after that go to the altar, where God will

will reciprocally ſign and ſeal your abſolution, and the promiſe he will make you of his heavenly kingdom, putting himſelf, by his bleſſed ſacrament, as a ſeal and ſignet upon your renewed heart.

Thus I think, *Philothea*, your ſoul ſhall be purged from ſin and all the affections of ſin. Yet as theſe affections eaſily ſpring up again in the ſoul, by reaſon of our infirmity, and of our concupiſcence, which may well be mortified, but which can never die while we are living here below upon earth, I will give you ſome advices, which, if well practiſed, will preſerve you for the time to come from mortal ſin, and from all the affections to it; to the end it may never more have place in your heart. And foraſmuch as the ſame inſtructions ſerve alſo for a ſtill more perfect purification; before I deliver them, I will ſay ſomething to you of this more abſolute purity, to which I deſire to conduct you.

CHAP. XXII.

That we muſt purify ourſelves from the affections we have to venial ſins.

IN proportion to the day-light coming on, we ſee more clearly in the glaſs the ſpots and ſtains that are in our faces: even ſo as the inward light of the Holy Spirit more and more inlightens our conſciences, we ſee more diſtinctly and more clearly the ſins, the inclinations, and imperfections, which may hinder us from attaining to true devotion; and the ſelf-ſame light which makes us ſee thoſe ſpots and blemiſhes, warms us with a deſire to cleanſe and purify ourſelves from them.

You ſhall then diſcover, my dear *Philothea*, that beſides mortal ſins, and the affections of mortal ſins, from which you have been purified by the exerciſes ſet down above, there remain yet in your ſoul divers inclinations and

affections to venial ſins. I do not ſay you ſhall diſcover venial ſins, but I ſay you ſhall diſcover affections and inclinations to venial ſins. Now the one is very different from the other; for we can never be altogether pure from venial ſins, at leaſt ſo as to continue for a long time in that purity: but we may well be without having any affection to venial ſins. Surely it is one thing to lye once or twice in merriment in matters of ſmall importance, and another thing to take a pleaſure in lying, and to have an affection to this kind of ſin.

What I ſay then is, that we muſt purge the ſoul from all the affections ſhe has to venial ſins; that is to ſay, that we muſt not nouriſh voluntarily the will to continue and perſevere in any kind of venial ſin: for it would be too great a baſeneſs to be willing deliberately to keep in our conſcience a thing ſo diſpleaſing to God, as is the will to diſpleaſe him. Venial ſin, be it ever ſo ſmall, diſpleaſes God, though not to that degree that he will caſt us off or damn us for it. Now if venial ſin diſpleaſes him, the will and affection we have to venial ſin is no better than a reſolution to have a will to diſpleaſe his divine Majeſty. And is it poſſible that a generous ſoul ſhould not only conſent to diſpleaſe her God, but alſo to have an affection to diſpleaſe him?

Such affections, *Philothea*, are directly contrary to devotion, as the affections to mortal ſin are to charity; they weaken the forces of the ſpirit, hinder divine conſolations, open the gate to temptations, and although they kill not the ſoul, yet they make it exceeding ſick. *Dying flies*, ſays the wiſe man, *ſpoil the ſweetneſs of the ointment. Eccles.* x. 1. He means to ſay, that flies not ſtaying long upon the ointment, but taſting it in paſſing by, ſpoil no more than they take, the reſt remaining ſound; but when they die in the ointment, they deprive it of its ſweetneſs, and make it nothing worth: in the ſame manner venial ſins, coming upon a devout ſoul, and

ſtaying

ſtaying not long there, bring no great damage to it, but if the ſame ſins dwell in the ſoul, by the affection ſhe takes to them, they make her without doubt loſe the ſweetneſs of the ointment, that is, holy devotion.

Spiders kill not the *bees*, but they ſpoil and corrupt their honey, and ſo entangle their combs with their webs, that the bees cannot go forward in their work; which is to be underſtood, when the *ſpiders* make any ſtay among them: ſo venial ſin kills not our ſoul, but yet it ſpoils devotion, and entangles the powers of the ſoul ſo much with bad habits and inclinations, that ſhe can no longer exert that promptitude of charity in which devotion conſiſts; but this is to be underſtood, when venial ſin takes up its abode in our conſciences, by ſetting our affection upon it.

It is of no conſequence, *Philothea*, to tell ſome little lie, to ſlip into ſome little irregularity in words, in actions, in looks, in dreſs, in mirth, in play, in dancing, provided that as ſoon as theſe ſpiritual *ſpiders* are entered into our conſcience, we chaſe and baniſh them away, as the *bees* do the corporal *ſpiders*: but if we permit them to make a ſtay in our hearts; and not only this, but if we have an affection to retain and multiply them there, we ſhall ſoon find our honey deſtroyed, and the hive of our conſcience corrupted and ruined. But I ſay once more, what likelihood is there that a generous ſoul, ſhould take pleaſure in diſpleaſing her God, ſhould affect to be diſagreeable to him, ſhould keep a will to do that which ſhe knows to be offenſive to him?

CHAP. XXIII.

That we ought to purify ourſelves from affections to unprofitable and dangerous things.

PLAY, dancing, feaſting, dreſſing out, theatrical ſhows, are things which in their ſubſtance are not evil, but indifferent, and ſuch as may be uſed

either well, or ill; nevertheleſs all theſe things are dangerous, and to bear an affection to them is yet more dangerous. I ſay then, *Philothea*, that altho' it be lawful to play, to dance, to dreſs out yourſelf, to be preſent at * innocent comedies, or to feaſt, yet to have an affection to ſuch things is contrary to devotion, and extremely hurtful and dangerous. It is not evil to do ſuch things, but it is evil to affect them. It is pity to ſow, in the land of our heart, ſuch vain and fooliſh affections, which take up the room of good impreſſions, and hinder the ſap of our ſoul from being employed in good inclinations.

Thus the ancient *Nazareans* abſtained not only from all that might inebriate, but alſo from the grape, and whatever came from the grape; not that the grape makes drunk, but becauſe it was to be feared, leſt by their taſting the grape they ſhould be tempted to drink of the wine. Now I do not ſay that we can never uſe theſe dangerous things, but I affirm that we can never ſet our affections upon them without prejudice to devotion. The ſtags, when they are too fat, withdraw themſelves, and retire into their thickets, becauſe being burthened with their own greaſe, they know they are not in condition to run, if they ſhould be hunted. So the heart of man, burthening itſelf with theſe unprofitable, ſuperfluous, and dangerous affections, cannot certainly run after its God readily, lightly, and eaſily, which is the true point of devotion. Little

* *Innocent comedies, (d'honneſtes comedies.)* It is not the meaning of the Saint in this paſſage to juſtify the aſſiſting at any ſuch *comedies*, or other plays, as have a tendency to encourage vice; or irreligion; or which ſerve to heighten the paſſions, to ſoften the ſoul, and to diſpoſe her to impure love, which is too often the caſe of our modern Engliſh plays. For ſuch as theſe the holy prelate would by no means allow to be *innocent*, but rather would loudly condemn them; as the holy Fathers and Saints have always done.

children

children pleaſe and weary themſelves in running after butterflies, and no one finds fault with them, becauſe they are little children: but is it not a ridiculous, yea rather a lamentable thing, to ſee men grown up ſet their heart and affections upon ſuch unworthy toys and trifles as thoſe things are which I have named; which beſides their unprofitableneſs, put us in danger of falling into irregularities and diſorders in the purſuit of them. Wherefore, my dear *Philothea*, I ſay we muſt purge ourſelves from theſe affections; for though the acts are not always contrary to devotion, yet the affections are always prejudicial to it.

CHAP. XXIV.

That we muſt purge ourſelves from our evil inclinations.

WE have moreover, *Philothea*, certain natural inclinations, which foraſmuch as they have not taken their origin from our particular ſins, are not properly ſins in us, neither mortal nor venial, but are called imperfections; and their acts are termed defects and failings. For example, St. *Paula*, according to the relation of St. *Jerome*, had a great inclination to ſadneſs and grief, ſo that, at the death of her children and of her huſband, ſhe was in danger of dying with grief; this was an imperfection in her, but not a ſin, becauſe ſhe had it againſt her will.

There are ſome people who are naturally light, others moroſe; ſome hard to receive the opinions of others; others inclined to indignation; ſome are prone to anger, others to love; and in ſhort there are few perſons in whom we may not obſerve ſome of theſe imperfections. Now although they are, as it were, proper and natural to each one, yet by care and by a contrary affection, they may be corrected and moderated, and we may even altogether free and purge ourſelves from them.

And I tell you, *Philothea*, it is what you must do. They have found the way to change bitter almond-trees into sweet, only by piercing them at the bottom to let out the juice: and why may not we let out our perverse inclinations, and become better? There is no nature so good, which may not be made evil by vicious habits; nor is there any nature so perverse, that may not in the first place by the grace of God, and then by industry and diligence, be brought under and overcome.

Wherefore I am now going to give you the instructions, and propose the exercises, by the help of which you shall purge your soul from all dangerous affections, from imperfections, and from all affections to venial sins, and more and more secure your conscience against all mortal sin. God give you the grace to practise them well.

THE

THE SECOND PART OF THE INTRODUCTION, CONTAINING DIVERS ADVICES

For the Elevation of the Soul to God, by Prayer and the Sacraments.

CHAP. I.

Of the neceſſity of Prayer.

PRAYER placing our underſtanding in the brightneſs and light of God, and expoſing our will to the heat of heavenly love, there is nothing that ſo much purges our underſtanding from its ignorances, and our will from its depraved affections. It is the water of benediction, the watering with which makes the plants of our good deſires grow green and flouriſh, waſhes our ſouls from their imperfections, and quenches the thirſt of paſſions in our hearts.

But above all, I recommend to you mental and cordial prayer, and particularly that which is made about the life and paſſion of our Lord, by looking on him often by meditation, your whole ſoul will fill herſelf with him, you ſhall learn his carriage, and frame your actions

tions according to the model of his. He is the light of the world; it is then in him, by him, and for him, that we ought to be brightened and enlightened. He is the tree of desire, under the shadow of which we are to refresh ourselves: He is the living fountain of *Jacob*, to wash away all our stains. In fine, as little children, by hearing their mothers, and by prattling with them, learn to speak their language, so we, by keeping close to our Saviour by meditation, and observing his words, his actions, and his affections, shall, by help of his grace, learn to speak, to act, and to will like him. We must stop here, *Philothea*, and believe me, we cannot go to God the Father, but through this gate: for even as the looking-glass could not terminate our sight, if the back were not tinned or leaded; so the divinity could not be well contemplated by us in this world below, if we were not joined to the sacred humanity of our Saviour, whose life and death is the most proportionable, sweet, delightful, and profitable object we can choose for our ordinary meditation. 'Tis not for nothing that our Saviour called himself the bread which comes down from heaven; for as bread ought to be eaten with all sorts of meats, so our Saviour ought to be meditated on, considered, and sought after, in all our prayers and actions. His life and death have been disposed and distributed into divers points, by many authors, to serve for meditation: those, whom I recommend to you, are St. *Bonaventure*, *Bellintani*, *Bruno*, *Capilia*, *Granada*, and *du Pont*.

Employ in it every day, an hour before dinner; if it may be, at the beginning of your morning; for then your mind will be less distracted, and more fresh after the repose of the night: but see that you spend no more than an hour in it, except your spiritual father should expressly prescribe it.

If you could perform this exercise in the church, and could find sufficient tranquillity there, it would be most easy and commodious for you; because neither

ther father nor mother, wife nor huſband, nor any other whatſoever, could well hinder you from ſtaying one hour in the church; whereas, being under ſome ſubjection, you could not perchance promiſe yourſelf to have an hour ſo free in your own houſe.

Begin all your prayers, be they mental or vocal, with the preſence of God: hold to this rule without exception, and in a ſhort time you will ſee how profitable it will be to you.

If you will be adviſed by me, ſay your *Pater*, your *Ave*, and your *Creed*, in Latin, but learn likewiſe to underſtand well the words of them in your own language; to the end, that ſaying them in the common language of the church, you may nevertheleſs reliſh the admirable and delicious ſenſe of thoſe holy prayers, which you muſt ſay, fixing profoundly your thoughts, and ſtirring up your affections upon the ſenſe of them; not hurrying yourſelf to ſay many, but taking care to ſay thoſe you do ſay, from your heart; for one only *Pater*, ſaid with a feeling, is of more worth than many run over in haſte.

The *beads* are a moſt profitable way of praying, if you know how to ſay them in a proper manner: and to this end, procure ſome one of thoſe little books which teach the way of reciting them. It is good alſo to ſay the Litanies of our Lord Jeſus, of our Lady, and of the Saints, and other ſuch vocal prayers as are in approved *Manuals* and *Primers*; yet with this caution, that if you have the gift of mental prayer, you always keep the chief place for that. So that if, afterward, either thro' multiplicity of buſineſs or ſome other reaſon, you cannot ſay your vocal prayers; you muſt not put yourſelf in pain, on that account, but reſt contented with only ſaying before or after your meditation, the *Pater*, *Ave*, and *Creed*.

If, in making your vocal prayer, you feel your heart drawn and invited to inward or mental prayer, refuſe not to go thither, but let your mind turn gently that way, and be not concerned for not finiſh-

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ing your vocal prayers, which you purpoſed to ſay; for the mental prayer, which you have made in their ſtead, is more pleaſing to God, and more profitable to your ſoul. I except the office of the Church if you be bound to ſay it, for in that you muſt fulfil your obligation.

If it ſhould happen, that all your morning ſhould paſs away without this ſacred exerciſe of mental prayer, either by the multitude of your affairs, or ſome cauſe (which you ought to prevent, as much as is poſſible) endeavour to repair this deficiency after dinner, in ſome hour the moſt remote from your meal; becauſe doing it preſently after dinner, before digeſtion be well advanced, you would find yourſelf heavy and drowſy, and your health would be prejudiced by it.

But if in the whole day you could not do it, you muſt repair this loſs by multiplying ejaculatory prayers, and by the reading ſome book of devotion, with ſome penance which may prevent the ill conſequences of this failure; and withal you muſt make a firm reſolution to bring yourſelf into order the day following.

CHAP II.

A ſhort method for meditation. And firſt of the preſence of God, which is the firſt point of the preparation.

BUT perhaps, *Philothea*, you know not how you are to make mental prayer, for it is a thing which, in this our age, few are ſo happy as to be acquainted with. And for this reaſon I preſent you with a plain and ſhort method for this purpoſe; till by reading ſeveral good books, which have been compoſed on this ſubject, and above all by uſe you may be more amply inſtructed.

And firſt I preſcribe you the preparation, which conſiſts in two points; the firſt of which is to place yourſelf in the preſence of God; and the ſecond to invoke

voke his aſſiſtance. Now to place yourſelf in the preſence of God, I ſet before you four principal means with which you may help yourſelf in this your beginning.

The firſt conſiſts in a lively and attentive apprehenſion of the general preſence of God; that is to ſay, that God is in all things and in every place, and that there is neither place no thing in the world, in which he is not moſt truly preſent: ſo that as the birds, whereſoever they fly, always meet with the air; ſo whereſoever we go, or wherever we are, we ſtill find God preſent.

Every one knows this truth; but every one is not attentive to apprehend it. Blind men, who ſee not the prince who is preſent with them, behave themſelves nevertheleſs with reſpect, when they are told of his preſence; but the truth is becauſe they ſee him not, they eaſily forget that he is preſent, and having forgot it, they ſtill more eaſily loſe their reſpect and reverence. Alas, *Philothea*, we do not ſee God, who is preſent with us: and tho' faith gives us notice of his preſence, yet not ſeeing him with our eyes, we too often forget him, and behave ourſelves as tho' God were very far from us: for altho' we well know, that he is preſent in all things, yet, not thinking on it, 'tis all one as if we knew it not. Therefore, before prayer, we muſt always ſtir up our ſouls to an attentive thought and conſideration of this preſence of God. Thus *David* apprehended his preſence when he cryed out, *If I aſcend into Heaven, (O my God) thou art there: If I deſcend into Hell thou art there!* Pſ. cxxxviii. And thus we ſhould uſe the words of *Jacob*, who having ſeen the ſacred ladder, ſaid, *O how terrible is this place! Indeed the Lord is in this Place, and I knew it not.* Gen. xxxviii. Meaning that he did not think of it; for he could not be ignorant that God was in all, and through all. When therefore you come to prayer, you muſt ſay with your whole heart, and to your heart: O my heart, my heart! God is truly here.

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The ſecond means to place yourſelf in this ſacred preſence, is to think, that God is not only in the place where you are, but that he is, after a moſt particular manner, in your heart, and in the very center of your ſpirit, which he enlivens and animates with his divine preſence, being there as the heart of your heart, and the ſpirit of your ſpirit: for, as your ſoul, being ſpread through all your body, is preſent in every part of it, and yet reſides in a more ſpecial manner in the heart; ſo likewiſe God being moſt preſent to all things, yet in a more particular manner reſides in our ſpirit. For this cauſe, *David* calls God *the God of his heart:* Pſ. lxxii. And St. *Paul* ſays, that in God *we live, we move and be:* Acts xvii. In conſideration then of this truth, ſtir up in your heart a great reverence towards God, who is there ſo intimately preſent.

The third means is, to conſider our Saviour, who, in his humanity, looks down from heaven on all people in the world, but eſpecially on chriſtians, who are his children, and more particularly ſuch as are in prayer, whoſe actions and behaviour he obſerves. And this is not a meer imagination, but but moſt certain truth: for altho' we ſee not him, yet he from above beholds us. And thus St. *Stephen* ſaw him at the time of his martyrdom. So that we may truly ſay with the Spouſe: *Cantic.* ii. *Behold he ſtands behind our wall: looking through the windows, looking through the lattice.*

The fourth manner conſiſts in helping ourſelves with a pure imagination, repreſenting to ourſelves our Saviour in in his ſacred humanity, as if he were hard by us, as we are wont to repreſent our friends to ourſelves, and to ſay; methinks I ſee ſuch a one doing this or that, it ſeems to me that I ſee him, or ſome ſuch thing. But if the moſt holy ſacrament of the altar were preſent, then this preſence would be real, and not by meer imagination; for the ſpecies

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and appearance of bread would be as a tapeſtry, behind which our Lord being really preſent, ſees and obſerves us, though we ſee not him in his own ſhape. Uſe then ſome one of theſe four means of placing your ſoul in the preſence of God before prayer; but they muſt not be all employed at one time; but only one at once, and that briefly and ſimply.

CHAP. III.

Of invocation, the ſecond point of the preparation.

INvocation is made in this manner: your ſoul being ſenſible that ſhe is in God's preſence, proſtrates herſelf with a moſt profound reverence, acknowledging that ſhe is moſt unworthy to abide before ſo ſovereign a majeſty; yet knowing that his goodneſs will have it ſo, ſhe humbly begs of him, the grace to ſerve him well, and to worſhip him in this meditation. If you pleaſe you may uſe ſome ſhort and inflamed words, ſuch as theſe of *David*; *Caſt me not (O God) away from thy face: and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Make thy face to ſhine upon thy ſervant, and I will conſider the wondrous things of thy law. Give me underſtanding, and I will ſearch out thy law, and I will keep it with all my heart. I am thy ſervant, give me underſtanding:* Pſ. cxviii. And ſuch like. It would alſo be of Service to you to call upon your good Angel, and upon the holy perſons who were concerned in the myſtery on which you meditate: as for example; in meditating on the death of our Lord, you may invocate our bleſſed Lady, St. *John*, St. *Mary Magdalen*, and the good thief; to the end that the inward affections and motions, which they at that time received, may be communicated to you. So, in meditating on your own death you may invoke your good Angel (who will be preſent with you) deſiring him to inſpire you with proper conſiderations! and ſo of other myſteries.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the third point of preparation, conſiſting in propoſing the myſtery we mean to meditate on.

AFTER theſe two uſual points of the preparation, there is a third, which is not common to all ſorts of meditations, which ſome call the fabrication or framing of the place, and others an interiour lecture. And this is nothing elſe, but to repreſent to your imagination, the whole of the myſtery on which you deſire to meditate, as if it paſſed really and indeed in your preſence: for example; if you would meditate on our Lord upon the croſs, you ſhould imagine yourſelf to be upon mount *Calvary*, and that you there ſee and hear all that was done, or ſaid, at our Lord's paſſion; or if you will (for it is all one) imagine with yourſelf, that in the very place where you are,, they are crucifying our Saviour, in ſuch a manner as the holy evangeliſts deſcribe. I ſay the ſame when you meditate on death, as I have noted in the meditation of it; and likewiſe in the meditation on hell, and in all ſuch like myſteries, where viſible and ſenſible things come in to the ſubject. For as to other myſteries relating to the greatneſs of God, the excellency of virtues, the end for which we were created, which are inviſible things, we muſt not think to uſe this kind of imagination. It is true, we may uſe indeed ſome ſimilitude or compariſon, to help us in the conſideration of them, but that is done with ſome difficulty; and my meaning is to treat with you very plainly, and in ſuch manner, as that your ſpirit may not be wearied in making inventions. Now, by means of this imagination, we ſhut up our ſpirit within the myſtery we mean to meditate on, to the end it may not run idly hither and thither, even as we ſhut up a bird

bird in a cage, or as we tie a hawk by her leaſh, that ſo ſhe may abide on the hand

Yet ſome will tell you, that 'tis better to uſe the pure thought of faith, and a ſimple apprehenſion altogether mental and ſpiritual in the repreſentation of theſe myſteries; or elſe to imagine that the things are acted in your own ſpirit: but this is too ſubtil for begginners; and until ſuch time as God ſhall raiſe you higher, I counſel you *Philothea*, to keep in the low valley, which I ſhew you.

CHAP. V.

Of conſiderations, which are the ſecond part of the meditation.

AFTER the work of the imagination, follows the work of the underſtanding, which we call meditation; and this is no other thing but one or more conſiderations, made in order to ſtir up our affections to God and the things of God. For in this, meditation is different from ſtudy, and from other thoughts and conſiderations, which are not directed to the acquiring of virtue, or the love of God; but to ſome other ends and intentions, as to become learned, to write or to diſpute. Having then ſhut up your ſpirit, as I have ſaid, within the bounds of the ſubject you deſire to meditate upon, either by the imagination, if the matter be ſenſible, or by a ſimple propoſal of it, if it be inſenſible, you ſhall begin to make conſiderations on it, of which you may ſee examples ready framed, in the mediations I have given you above; and if your ſpirit find a ſufficient reliſh, light, and fruit, in one of the conſiderations, ſtay there, without going further; doing as the bees, which never leave the flower, ſo long as they find honey to be got out of it: but if you find not ſucceſs according to your wiſhes, in one conſideration, after you ave tried it for a little while, proceed to another;

but

but be ſure to go on ſoftly and quietly in this buſineſs, without hurrying yourſelf too much.

CHAP. VI.

Of affections and reſolutions, the third part of the meditation.

MEDITATION produces good motions in the will, or affective part of our ſoul; ſuch as the love of God and of our neigbour, the deſire of heaven and eternal glory, zeal for the ſalvation of ſouls, the imitation of the life of our Lord, compaſſion, admiration, joy, fear of God's diſpleaſure, of judgment, and of hell, hatred of ſin, confidence in the goodneſs and mercy of God, and confuſion for our wicked life paſt. And in theſe affections our ſpirit ſhould ſpread, and extend itſelf as much as it is able; and if you deſire help in this, take in hand the firſt *tome* of the meditations of Dom. *Andrew Capilia*, and read the preface, where he ſhews the manner of dilating theſe affections; as father *Arias* does more at large, in the ſecond part of his treatiſe of prayer.

Yet you muſt not dwell ſo long O *Philothea*, upon theſe general affections; as not to reduce them to ſpecial and particular reſolutions for your correction and amendment: for example; the firſt word that our Lord ſpoke on the croſs, will doubtleſs ſtir up in your ſoul a good affection of imitation, in the way of a deſire to pardon and to love your enemies; but this will be to ſmall purpoſe, if you add not to it a particular reſolution in this manner: Well then, I will not hereafter be picqued at ſuch or ſuch angry words, which this or that perſon, my neighbour, or my ſervant, ſhall ſay of me; nor reſent this or that ſlight, which ſuch or ſuch a perſon ſhall put upon me; but on the contrary; I will ſay or do ſuch and ſuch a thing to gain him and appeaſe him: and ſo of other things. And by this means, *Philothea*, you

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ſhall correct your faults, in a ſhort time; whereas, by affections only, you would amend but ſlowly and with greater difficulty.

CHAP. VII.

Of the concluſion, and ſpiritual noſegay.

LAST of all, we muſt conclude our meditation by three acts, which muſt be done with all the humility we can. The firſt is, thankſgiving to God, for the good affections and reſolutions he has given us, and for his goodneſs and mercy, we have diſcovered, in the myſtery of the meditation. The ſecond is, an oblation, by which we offer to God this ſame goodneſs and mercy of his, with the death, the blood, and the virtues of his Son, and jointly with them our affections and reſolutions. The third is, petition or ſupplication, by which we beg of God, and conjure him to communicate to us, the graces and virtues of his Son; and to give his bleſſing to our affections and reſolutions, to the end we may faithfully put them in execution: then we pray in like manner for the church, for our paſtors, parents, and friends, and others; employing to that end, the interceſſion of our bleſſed Lady, and of the Angels and Saints: laſtly, I have obſerved that you ſhould ſay a *Pater* and *Ave*, which is the general and neceſſary prayer of all the faithful.

To all this I have added, that you ſhould gather a little noſegay of devotion: ſuch as have been walking in a beautiful garden, go not willingly out of it without taking in their hand four or five flowers, to ſmell to, and keep all the day after: even ſo, when our ſpirit has been entertaining itſelf by meditation on ſome myſtery, we ought to pick out one, or two, or three points, in which we have found moſt reliſh, and which are moſt proper for our advancement, and ſhould think often on them, and as it were ſpiritually

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ſmell to them during the courſe of the day: now this is to be done in the ſame place where we have been making our meditation, by entertaining ourſelves on the ſubject, or walking by ourſelves for ſome time after.

CHAP. VIII.

Certain profitable advices on the ſubject of meditation.

1. ABOVE all things, *Philothea*, when you riſe from your meditation, you muſt remember the reſolutions and deliberations you have taken, and and carefully put them in practice that day. This is the great fruit of meditation, without which oftentimes it is not only unprofitable, but hurtful; for virtues meditated and not practiſed, puff up ſometimes the ſpirit and the heart, and make us think, that we are ſuch indeed, as we have deſigned and reſolved to be; which without doubt is true, when our reſolutions are lively and ſolid; but then they are not ſuch, but rather vain and dangerous, if they be not practiſed: we muſt therefore by all means endeavour to practiſe them, and ſeek all occaſions, little or great, of putting them in execution: for example; if I have reſolved to win by mildneſs the ſpirit of ſuch as offend me, I will ſeek this very day an opportunity to meet with them, and lovingly to ſalute them; or if I cannot meet with them, at leaſt to ſpeak well of them, and to pray to God in their favour.

2. After going out from this prayer of the heart, take heed you give not your heart a jog, leſt you ſpill the precious balm you have received by means of your prayer: my meaning is, that you muſt for ſome little time, if poſſible, keep yourſelf in ſilence, and gently remove your heart from your prayer to your other employments; retaining ſo long as you are able, the feeling and the affections you have conceived. A man that has received ſome precious liquor in a fair china diſh, to carry it to his houſe, will go ſoftly,

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not looking aſide, but ſometimes before him, for fear of ſtumbling or making a wrong ſtep, ſometimes upon his diſh, for fear of ſpilling the liquor: even ſo ought you to do; when you go out from your meditation, diſtract not yourſelf immediately, but look only before you; as much as to ſay, if you muſt meet with any one, whom you are obliged to entertain, or to hear, there is no remedy, you muſt accommodate yourſelf to that, yet in ſuch a manner as to have regard alſo to your heart, that as little as poſſible of the liquor of holy prayer may be ſpilt on that occaſion.

You muſt even accuſtom yourſelf to know how to paſs from prayer to all kind of buſineſs, which your vocation and profeſſion juſtly and lawfully requires of you, though it ſeem ever ſo diſtant from the affections you have received in prayer. So let the lawyer learn to paſs from prayer to pleading, the merchant to his traffick, the married woman to the duties of her calling and the care of her family, with ſo much ſweetneſs and tranquility, that the ſpirit be not therefore diſturbed: for ſince both the one and the other is according to the will of God, we muſt learn to paſs from the one to the other in the ſpirit of humility and devotion.

3. You muſt alſo know, that it ſhall ſometimes happen to you, that immediately after the preparation, your affection ſhall find itſelf quite ſtirred up in God: in that caſe *Philothea*, you muſt looſe the bridle to it, without ſtaying to follow the method I have given you: for although commonly ſpeaking conſideration ought to go before affections and reſolutions, yet when the Holy Ghoſt gives you affections before conſideration, you muſt not then ſeek conſideration, ſince this is uſed for no other end but to ſtir up the affection. In a word, whenſoever affections offer themſelves, we muſt receive them, and make room for them, whether they come before or after all the con-

ſiderations: and although I have placed the affections after all the conſiderations, I have done it only to diſtinguiſh more plainly the parts of prayer; for otherwiſe it is a general rule, never to reſtrain the affections, but always to let them have their free courſe when they preſent themſelves: and this I ſay not only with regard to the other affections, but alſo with regard to thankſgiving, oblation and petitions, which may likewiſe be uſed in the midſt of the conſiderations, for they muſt no more be reſtrained than the other affections, though afterwards for the concluſion of the meditation, they muſt be repeated, and taken up again. But as for r ſolutions, they are always to be made after the affections, and at the end of the whole meditation, before the concluſion; becauſe as in theſe we repreſent to ourſelves particular and familiar objects, they would put us in danger of entering into diſtractions, if we ſhould mingle them with our affections.

Amidſt our affections and reſolutions, it is good to uſe colloquies, and to ſpeak ſometimes to our Lord, ſometimes to the Angels, and the perſons repreſented in the myſteries; to the Saints, to ourſelves, to our own heart, to ſinners, and even to inſenſible creatures; as we ſee *David* does in his pſalms, and the other Saints in their meditations and prayers.

CHAP. IX.

Of the dryneſſes which we ſometimes experience in meditation.

IF it ſhould happen to you, *Philothea*, to have no reliſh or comfort in meditation; I conjure you not to diſturb yourſelf, but ſometimes open the door to vocal prayer, lament complaining of yourſelf to our Lord; confeſs your unworthineſs, pray to him to aſſiſt you, kiſs his picture, if you have it, ſay to him thoſe words of *Jacob*; Gen. xxxii. *I will not let thee go, O Lord, till thou haſt given me thy bleſſing:*

ſing: or thoſe of the *Cananean* woman; Matt. xv. *Yea Lord, I am a dog; but yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's table.*

At other times take up ſome ſpiritual book, and read it with attention, till ſuch time as your ſpirit be awakened, and return to you. Stir up ſometimes your heart by ſome poſture and motion of exterior devotion, proſtrating yourſelf on the ground, croſſing your hands before your breaſt, or embracing a crucifix; which is to be underſtood, provided you be alone, in ſome private place. But if after all this you receive no comfort, diſturb not yourſelf, be the dryneſs ever ſo great, but continue to keep yourſelf in a devout poſture before your God. How many courtiers are there that go a hundred times a year into the Prince's chamber, without hopes of ſpeaking to him, but only to be ſeen by him, and to pay their duty to him? So ought we, my dear *Philothea*, to come to holy prayer, purely and merely to pay our duty, and to teſtify our fidelity. If it pleaſe his divine Majeſty to ſpeak to us and to entertain himſelf with us by his holy inſpirations and interior conſolations, it will be doubtleſs a great honour to us, and a moſt delightful pleaſure; but if it pleaſe him not to do us this favour, but to leave us without once ſpeaking to us, as if he ſaw us not, or as if we were not in his preſence, we muſt not for all that go away, but muſt ſtay there, before this Sovereign goodneſs, with a devout and peaceful carriage; and then infallibly our patience will be pleaſing to him, and he will take notice of our diligence and perſeverance: ſo that another time, when we ſhall return and come before him, he will favour us, and entertain himſelf with us, by his conſolations, and make us experience the ſweetneſs of holy prayer. Yet, if he ſhould not do ſo, let us content ourſelves, *Philothea*, that it is an exceeding great honour for us to come before him, and to be in his ſight.

CHAP. X.

An exerciſe for the morning.

BESIDES this principal entire and formed mental prayer, and the other vocal prayers which you ought to make once every day, there are five other ſorts of prayers which are ſhorter, and as it were ſlips and twigs of the other principal prayer. Amongſt which, the firſt is that which is made in the morning, as a general preparation to all the actions of the day, which you may make in this manner.

1. Adore God moſt profoundly, and give him thanks for the grace he has done you in preſerving you the night paſt; and if in it you have committed any ſin, aſk his pardon for it.

2. Conſider that this preſent day is given you, that in it you may gain the future day of eternity, and make a ſtrong purpoſe to employ the day well to this intention.

3. Forecaſt with yourſelf, what buſineſs, what converſation you are like to meet with this day; what opportunities to ſerve God; as likewiſe what temptations may befall you to offend him, either by anger, or by vanity, or by any other irregularity; and prepare yourſelf with a holy reſolution to make good uſe of thoſe means which ſhall be offered you, to ſerve God, and to advance your devotion; as alſo on the other hand, diſpoſe yourſelf carefully to avoid, reſiſt, and overcome, whatever may preſent itſelf prejudicial to your ſalvation, and to the glory of God. Now it is not enough barely to make this reſolution, but you muſt alſo prepare the means to put it properly in execution: for example; if I foreſee that I am to treat of any buſineſs, with one that is paſſionate, and prompt to anger, I will not only reſolve to refrain from giving him any offence, but I will prepare words of meekneſs to prevent his anger, or uſe the aſſiſtance

ance of ſome perſon that may keep him in temper: If I foreſee that I ſhall have an opportunity to viſit ſome ſick body, I will forecaſt the time, with the comforts and aſſiſtances which I may afford him: and ſo of the reſt.

4. This done, humble yourſelf before God, acknowledging that of yourſelf you can do nothing of that which you have reſolved upon, either as to the avoiding evil or doing good. And, as if you held your heart in your hands, offer it with all your good deſigns to the divine Majeſty, intreating him to take it into his protection, and ſtrengthen it, that it may go on proſperouſly in his ſervice, uſing theſe or the like words interiorly; O Lord, behold here this my poor miſerable heart, which through thy goodneſs has conceived many good affections; but alas! it is of itſelf too weak and wretched to execute the good which it deſires, unleſs thou impart to it thy heavenly bleſſing; which for this end I humbly beg of thee, O merciful Father, by the merit of the paſſion of thy Son, to whoſe honour I conſecrate this day, and all that remains of my life. Then call upon our Bleſſed Lady, upon your good Angel, and the Saints, to the end they may all aſſiſt you to this effect.

But all theſe ſpiritual acts muſt be made briefly, and fervently, before you go out of your chamber, if it be poſſible; that by means of this exerciſe, all that you are to do the whole day following, may be watered with the bleſſing of God: and I beg of you *Philothea*, never to fail in this.

CHAP. XI.

Of the evening exerciſe and examination of conſcience.

AS before your corporal dinner you ſhall make a ſpiritual dinner by the means of meditation: ſo before your ſupper, you muſt make a little ſupper, or at leaſt a devout and ſpiritual collation. Procure

then ſome time a little before your ſupper, and being proſtrate before God, recollect your ſpirit in the preſence of Jeſus Chriſt crucified (whom you may repreſent to yourſelf by a ſingle conſideration, and an interior glance of the eye) and kindle again in your heart the fire of your morning meditation, by a dozen of lively aſpirations, humiliations and amorous efforts which you ſhall make towards this divine Saviour of your Soul; or elſe, by repeating thoſe points of your morning meditations which you reliſhed moſt, or by ſtirring yourſelf up to devotion, by ſome new ſpiritual ſubject, as you ſhall like beſt.

As to the examination of conſcience, which muſt always be made before we go to bed, every one knows how it is to be performed. 1. We give thanks to God for having preſerved us the day paſt. 2. We examine how we have behaved ourſelves in all the hours of the day: and to do this more eaſily, we may conſider where we have been, with whom, and in what we have been employed. 3. If we find, that we have done any good, we muſt give God thanks for it; and on the other hand, if we have done any evil in thoughts, words or works, we muſt aſk pardon of his divine Majeſty, with a reſolution to confeſs it the firſt opportunity, and carefully to amend it. 4. After this, we recommend to divine Providence our ſoul and body, the holy Church, our parents and friends; we beg of our Lady, of our Angel Guardian and of the Saints, that they would watch over us and for us: and ſo, with the bleſſing of God, we go to take that reſt which his will has appointed for us.

This exerciſe muſt never be forgotten, no more than that of the morning; for by that of the morning you open the windows of your Soul to the Sun of juſtice; and by this of the evening; you ſhut them againſt the darkneſs of hell.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of ſpiritual recollection.

IT is here, dear *Philothea*, that I wiſh you to take much to heart the following my counſel; for in this article conſiſteth one of the moſt aſſured means of your ſpiritual advancement.

As often as you can in the day recall your ſpirit home to the preſence of God, by one of the four ways which I have marked out for you: obſerve what God is doing, and what you are doing, and you ſhall find his eyes turned towards you, and perpetually fixed upon you by an incomparable love. O God, ſhall you ſay, why do I not look always on thee, as thou always lookeſt on me? Why doſt thou think ſo often on me, O my Lord, and why do I think ſo ſeldom on thee? Where are we, O my ſoul? Our true place is God, and where is it that we find ourſelves?

As birds have their neſts on trees to retire to, when they have occaſion; and the deer have buſhes and thickets in which they keep themſelves cloſe, and and under covert, taking the cool of the ſhade in the ſummer: even ſo, *Philothea*, our hearts ſhould chooſe ſome place every day, either on mount *Calvary*, or in the wounds of our Lord, or in ſome other place near him; to make their retreat thither on all ſorts of occaſions, and there to refreſh and recreate themſelves amidſt our exterior affairs, and to be there as in a ſtrong hold, to defend themſelves againſt temptations. Bleſſed ſhall that ſoul be which can ſay with truth to our Lord, *Thou art my place of ſtrength and my refuge, my defence from ſtorms, and my ſhadow from the heat.* Pſ. lxx. 3. Iſai. xxv. 4.

Remember then, *Philothea*, always to make divers retreats into the ſolitude of your heart, whilſt you are outwardly taken up with buſineſs or converſation;

this mental ſolitude can by no means be hindered by the multitude of ſuch as are about you; for they are not about your heart, but about your body, ſo that your heart may remain all alone, in the preſence of God alone. This was the exerciſe of King *David* amidſt his many occupations, as he teſtifies in a thouſand places of his pſalms: as when he ſays, *O Lord, as for me, I am always with thee. I beheld the Lord always before me. I have lifted up my eyes to thee, O my God who dwelleſt in heaven. My eyes are always towards God*, &c.

And indeed, our converſations uſually are not ſo ſerious, but that we may from time to time withdraw our heart from them to retire into this divine ſolitude.

When the father or mother of St. *Catharine* of *Siena* had taken from her all opportunity of place and leiſure time to pray and meditate, our Lord inſpired her to make a little interior oratory in her own ſoul, into which retiring mentally, ſhe might amidſt exterior affairs, attend to this holy mental ſolitude: and when the world afterwards aſſaulted her, ſhe received no inconvenience from it, becauſe, as ſhe ſaid, ſhe had ſhut herſelf up in her interior cloſet, where ſhe comforted herſelf with her heavenly Spouſe. From her own experience of this exerciſe, ſhe afterwards counſelled her ſpiritual children to make them a room within their heart, and to abide there.

Withdraw then ſome time your ſpirit into your heart, where ſeparated from all men, you may, heart to heart, treat on the buſineſs of your ſoul with your God, and ſay with *David*; Pſ. ci. *I watched and am become like the pelican in the wilderneſs, like the night-raven, within the houſe. I have watched, and am become as a ſparrow all alone on the houſe top.* Which words, beſides their literal ſenſe, which ſhews that this great King took ſome hours to ſpend in ſolitude in the contemplation of ſpiritual things, do moreover point out to us, in their myſtical ſenſe, three excellent retreats, and as it were, three hermitages in which we may

exerciſe

exerciſe ourſelves in ſolitude, in imitation of our Saviour, who on mount *Calvary* was like the pelican of the wilderneſs, which quickens her dead young ones with her own blood: In his nativity, in the forſaken ſtable, he was as the night-raven in a ruinous building, mourning and weeping for our offences and ſins; and at the day of his aſcenſion, was like to the ſparrow, withdrawing himſelf, and flying up to heaven, which is as it were the houſe top of the world. And in all theſe three places we may make our ſpiritual retreats, even in the midſt of the turmoils of our exterior employments. Bleſſed *Elzear*, count of *Arian* in *Provence*, having been long abſent from his devout and chaſte *Delphina*, ſhe ſent an expreſs to him, to inform herſelf of his health, and he made her this anſwer; I am very well, my dear wife; but if you have a mind to ſee me, ſeek me in the wound of the ſide of our ſweet Saviour, for 'tis there I dwell, and there you ſhall find me, if you ſeek for me elſewhere you will ſeek in vain. This was a Chriſtian nobleman indeed.

CHAP. XIII.

Of aſpirations, ejaculatory prayers, and good thoughts.

WE retire into God becauſe we aſpire to him; and aſpire to him, that we may retire into him: ſo that the aſpiring to God, and the ſpiritual retiring into him, do mutually maintain one another, and both of them proceed and ſpring from good thoughts.

Aſpire then very often to God, my *Philothea*, by ſhort but ardent dartings of your heart; admire his beauty, invoke his aſſiſtance, caſt yourſelf in ſpirit at the foot of the croſs, adore his goodneſs, aſk him often concerning your ſalvation, give your Soul to him a thouſand times a day, fix your inward eyes upon his ſweetneſs, ſtretch out your hand to him as a little child to his father, that he may conduct you; place him in your boſom, like a delicious noſegay;

plant him in your ſoul like a ſtandard; and make a thouſand ſorts of different motions of your heart, to inkindle the love of God within you, and to excite yourſelf to a paſſionate and tender affection for this divine Spouſe. This is the way of making thoſe ejaculatory prayers which the great St. *Auſtin* ſo carefully recommended to the devout Lady *Proba*. *Philothea*, our ſpirit giving itſelf thus to the company, privacy and familiarity of our God, will be all perfumed with his perfections. Now this exerciſe is not difficult, for it may be interlaced with all our buſineſſes and occupations without incommoding them at all; foraſmuch as both in this ſpiritual retiring and in theſe interior aſpirations, we only take little ſhort diverſions, which no way hinder, but help us very much in the purſuit of what we are about. The pilgrim that takes a little wine to cheriſh his heart, and refreſh his mouth, though he ſtops a little for this purpoſe, breaks not off his journey for that, but gains ſtrength to finiſh it more ſpeedily and eaſily, reſting only that he may go on the better.

Many have gathered together a ſtore of vocal aſpirations, which indeed are very profitable; but I ſhould not adviſe you to tie yourſelf down to any ſort of words, but to pronounce either with heart, or mouth, ſuch as your love ſhall, without any ſtudy, ſuggeſt to you; for it will furniſh you with as many as you could wiſh. It is true, there are certain words which have a particular force to ſatisfy the heart in this reſpect. Such as the aſpirations ſown ſo thick in the pſalms of *David*; the frequent invocations of the name of JESUS, the ejaculations of love expreſſed in the *Canticles*, &c. Spiritual ſongs alſo ſerve for the ſame intent when they are ſung with attention.

In fine; as they, that are in love with a human and natural affection, have almoſt always their thoughts turned towards their beloved, their heart full of this ſame object of their paſſion, and their mouth ever employed in its praiſe; and when their beloved

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is abſent, they loſe no occaſion to teſtify their affection by letters, and meet not with a tree on the bark of which they do not write the name of their beloved. Even ſo, ſuch as love God cannot ceaſe to think on him; to breathe for him, to aſpire to him, and to ſpeak of him, and if it were poſſible, they would engrave the holy and ſacred name of Jeſus on the breaſts of all people in the world.

And to this all things invite them, and there is not any creature which does not declare to them the praiſes of their beloved; and, as St. *Auſtin* ſays, after St. *Antony*, every thing in the world ſpeaks to them with a kind of dumb language, yet very intelligible, in favour of their love; all things excite them to good thoughts, from whence afterwards ariſe many motions and aſpirations of the ſoul to God; behold ſome examples.

St. *Gregory* biſhop of *Nazianzum*, as he himſelf relates to his people, walking on the ſea ſhore, took notice how the waves, advancing upon the beach, left behind them ſhells, and little periwinkles, ſtalks of weeds, little oyſters, and ſuch like medley, which the ſea caſt up, and as it were ſpit it out upon the ſhore, and then returning with other waves, took back part of them and ſwallowed them up again, while the rocks that were near continued firm and immoveable, though the billows beat ever ſo rudely upon them, upon which he made this good reflection; that weak ſouls, like ſhells and ſtalks of weeds, ſuffer themſelves to be carried away, ſometimes by affliction, ſometimes by conſolation, at the mercy of the unconſtant billows of fortune; but that courageous ſouls continue firm and unmoved under all kind of ſtorms: and from this thought he proceeded to thoſe aſpirations of *David*, Pſ. lxviii. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even to my very ſoul. O Lord, deliver me out of theſe deep waters. I am come into the depth of the ſea, and a tempeſt has overwhelmed me.*

For at that time he was in affliction for the unhappy uſurpation, attempted by *Maximus* on his biſhoprick.

St. *Fulgentius* biſhop of *Ruſpa*, being preſent at a general aſſembly of the Roman nobility, when *Theodorick* king of the *Goths* made an oration to them, and beholding the ſplendor of ſo many great lords, ranked each one according to his quality: O God, ſaid he, how glorious and beautiful muſt the heavenly *Jeruſalem* be, ſince earthly *Rome* here below appears in ſo much pomp! And if in this world the lovers of vanity be permitted to ſhine ſo bright, what muſt that glory be which is reſerved in the other world for the lovers and contemplators of verity!

St. *Anſelm* archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, whoſe birth has highly honoured our mountains, was admirable in this practice of good thoughts. A hare preſſed by hounds, as this holy prelate was on a journey, ran under his horſe, as to a place of refuge, ſuggeſted by the imminent danger of death; whilſt the hounds barking all round durſt not attempt to violate the ſanctuary to which their prey had taken recourſe. A ſight indeed very extraordinary, which made all the company laugh; whilſt the great *Anſelm* weeping and ſighing, cried out, Ah! you laugh, but the poor beaſt does not laugh; the enemies of the ſoul after hunting, and driving her on, by divers turnings and windings through all ſorts of ſins, ly in wait for her at the narrow paſſage of death, to catch and devour her, and ſhe being in a dreadful plight ſeeks ſuccour and refuge on every ſide: which if ſhe find not, then do her enemies laugh and mock at her. Which when the Saint had ſaid, he went away ſighing.

Conſtantine the great wrote with reſpect to St. *Anthony:* at which the religious about him being greatly aſtoniſhed, Why, ſaid he, do you admire that a king ſhould write to a man? Admire rather that the eternal God has writ his law to mortal men; yea more, has

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ſpoken to them by word of mouth in the perſon of his Son.

St. *Francis* ſeeing a ſheep all alone amidſt a flock of goats, Obſerve, ſaid he, to his companion, the little poor ſheep, how mild it is amidſt the goats; our bleſſed Lord walked thus meekly and humbly among the *Phariſees*. At another time, ſeeing a little lamb devoured by a hog; Ah! little lamb, ſaid he weeping, how lively doſt thou repreſent the death of my Saviour!

That great perſon of our age, *Francis Borgia*, while he was yet duke of *Gandia*, going a hawking, made to himſelf a thouſand devout conceptions: I admired, ſaid he afterwards, how the faulcons come to hand, ſuffer themſelves to be hooded, and to be tied to the pearch; and that men are ſo rebellious to the voice of God.

The great St. *Baſil* ſaid, that the roſe in the midſt of thorns makes this remonſtrance to Men; *That which is moſt agreeable in this world, O ye mortals, is mingled with ſorrow: nothing here is pure; regret always purſues after mirth; widowhood after marriage; care after fruitfulneſs; ignominy follows glory; expence follows honour, loathing comes after delights, and ſickneſs after health. The roſe is a fair flower,* (ſaid this holy man) *but yet it gives me a great grief, putting me in mind of my ſin, for which the earth has been condemned to bring forth thorns.*

A devout ſoul ſtanding over a brook, and ſeeing the heavens there repreſented with the ſtars in a very clear night; O my God, ſaid ſhe, theſe ſame ſtars ſhall one day be underneath my feet, when thou ſhalt have lodged me in thy holy tabernacles: and as the ſtars of heaven are here repreſented on earth, even ſo the men of this earth are repreſented in the living fountain of the divine charity. Another ſeeing a river ſwiftly flowing, cried out in this manner; My ſoul ſhall never be at reſt, till ſhe be ſwallowed up in the

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ſea of the divinity; which is its original ſource. St. *Franciſca*, conſidering a pleaſant brook upon the bank of which ſhe was kneeling at her prayers, was rapt into an extaſy, often repeating theſe words, *The grace of my God flows thus gently and ſweetly as this little ſtream.* Another, looking on the trees in bloom, ſighed and ſaid; Why am I alone without bloſſom in the garden of the Church? Another, ſeeing little chickens gathered together under the hen, O Lord, (ſaid he) keep us always under the ſhadow of thy wings. Another, looking upon the flower called *Heliotropium*, which turns to the ſun, When ſhall the time be, ſaid he, O my God, that my Soul ſhall faithfully follow the attractions of thy goodneſs? And ſeeing the flowers called panſies, fair to the eye, but having no ſmell, Ah! ſaid he, ſuch are my conceptions, fair in ſhew, but of no effect, and producing nothing.

See, *Philothea*, how one may draw good thoughts and holy aſpirations from every thing that preſents itſelf in the variety of this mortal life. Unhappy are they, who turn off the creatures from their Creator, to turn them towards ſin; and happy are they that turn the creatures to the glory of their Creator, and employ their vanity to the honour of the ſovereign verity. As S. *Gregory Nazianzen* ſays, *I am want to refer all Things to my ſpiritual profit.* Read the devout epitaph which St. *Jerome* made of St. *Paula*; for it is agreeable to ſee how it is all ſprinkled with aſpirations, and holy thoughts, which ſhe was wont to draw from all ſorts of occurrences.

Now in this exerciſe of ſpiritual recollection, and of ejaculatory prayers, conſiſts the great work of devotion; this may ſupply the want of all other prayers, but the failing in this can ſcarcely be repaired by any other means. Without it we cannot well lead a contemplative life, and very ill an active one: without it our repoſe is but idleneſs, and our work trouble.

trouble. Wherefore I conjure you to embrace it with your whole heart, without ever giving it over.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the moſt holy Maſs, and how we ought to hear it.

HITHERTO I have not ſpoken to you any thing of the ſun of ſpiritual exerciſes, I mean the moſt holy, moſt ſacred, and moſt ſovereign ſacrifice and ſacrament of the maſs, the center of the Chriſtian religion, the heart of devotion, the ſoul of piety, an ineffable myſtery, which comprizes the abyſs of the divine charity, and by which God, applying himſelf really to us, communicates to us magnificently his graces and favours.

2. Prayer, made in union of this divine ſacrifice, has an unſpeakable force: ſo that, *Philothea*, the ſoul by this help abounds with heavenly favours; as leaning here upon her well-beloved, who fills her ſo full of odours and ſpiritual ſweetneſſes, that ſhe reſembles a pillar of ſmoke proceeding from aromatical wood, from myrrh, and frankincenſe, and from all the powders of the perfumer, as it is ſaid in the *Canticles*.

3. Make then all manner of efforts to aſſiſt every day at the holy Maſs, that you may jointly with the prieſt offer up the ſacrifice of your Redeemer to God his Father, for yourſelf and for the whole church. The Angels, as St. *John Chryſoſtom* ſays, are always there preſent in great numbers to honour this holy myſtery; and we being there preſent with them, and with one and the ſame intention, cannot but receive many favourable influences by ſuch a ſociety. The choirs of the Triumphant Church and thoſe of the Church militant come to join and unite themſelves to our Lord in this divine action, that with him, in him, and through him, they may raviſh the heart of God the Father, and make his mercy all our own. O what a happineſs is it to a ſoul devoutly

voutly to contribute her affections for obtaining ſo precious and deſirable a good!

4. If, by ſome unavoidable hindrance, you are prevented from aſſiſting at the celebration of this ſovereign ſacrifice by being really preſent there, at leaſt you muſt carry your heart thither, and aſſiſt at it by a ſpiritual preſence. At ſome hour then of the morning, go in ſpirit (if in any other manner you cannot) to the Church, and there unite your intention with that of all the faithful; and uſe the ſame interior acts of devotion in the place you are, which you would uſe, if you were really preſent at the office of the holy Maſs, in ſome Church.

5. Now to hear either really or mentally the holy Maſs, in a proper manner: firſt from the beginning, till the prieſt goes up to the altar, make with him your preparation; which conſiſts in placing yourſelf in the preſence of God, and acknowledging your unworthineſs, and begging pardon for your ſins. 2. From the time the prieſt goes up to the altar, till the Goſpel, conſider the coming, and the life of our Lord in this world, by a ſimple and general conſideration. 3. From the Goſpel till after the *Creed*, conſider the preaching of our Saviour, and proteſt that you reſolve to live and die in the faith and obedience of his holy word, and in the union of the holy catholick Church. 4. From the *Creed* to the *Pater Noſter*, apply your heart to the myſteries of the death and paſſion of our Redeemer, which are actually and eſſentially repreſented in this holy ſacrifice; which with the prieſt, and the reſt of the people, you ſhall offer to God the Father, for his honour and for your ſalvation. 5. From the *Pater Noſter* to the communion, ſtrive to excite a thouſand deſires in your heart, wiſhing ardently to be for ever joined and united to our Saviour by everlaſting love. 6. From the Communion till the end, give thanks to his divine Majeſty for his incarnation, his life, his death, and his paſſion for the love he teſtifies to us in this holy ſacrifice; conjuring him by this ſame love, to be for

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ever merciful to you, to your parents, to your friends, and to the whole Church; and humbling yourself with your whole heart, receive devoutly the benediction of God, which our Lord gives you by the ministry of his officer.

But if you chuse during the Mass, to make your meditation on the mysteries which you take in their course day by day, it will not then be needful to turn off your thoughts to make all these particular acts; but it will suffice, that at the beginning you direct your intention to adore, and to offer up this holy sacrifice, by the exercise of your meditation and prayer: for in all Meditations are found the aforesaid acts, either expressly, or tacitly and equivalently.

CHAP. XV.

Of other publick and common exercises.

BESIDES hearing mass, on holy days and *Sundays*, you ought, O *Philothea*, to be present at the divine office of the hours and of the vespers, as far as your convenience will permit. For these days are dedicated to God, and in them we ought to perform more acts to his honour and glory, than on other days. By this means you shall feel a thousand sweetnesses of devotion, as St. *Austin* did, who testifies in his Confessions, that hearing the divine office in the beginning of his conversion, his heart melted into sweetness, and his eyes into tears of piety. And indeed, to speak once for all, there is ever more of benefit and of comfort in the publick offices of the Church than in particular performances; God having so ordained that community may be preferred before all kind of particularity.

Enter willingly into the confraternities of the place where you are; and especially into those whose exercises bring with them most fruit and edification; for

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in this you ſhall practiſe a ſort of obedience very acceptable to God, foraſmuch as theſe confraternities, though they are not commanded, are nevertheleſs recommended by the Church, which to teſtify how much ſhe deſires that many ſhould enroll themſelves in them, grants indulgences and other privileges to ſuch as enter into them; and beſides it is always a very charitable thing to concur with many, and to co-opetate with them in their good deſigns. And altho' it may happen, that one might perform as good exerciſes by one's ſelf alone, as one does in the company of the confraternity, and perchance might take more pleaſure in performing them in private; yet is God more glorified by the union and contribution we make of our good works with thoſe of our brethren and neighbours.

I ſay the ſame of all ſorts of publick prayers and devotions, which, as much as is poſſible, we ſhould countenance with our good example for the edification of our neighbour, and our affection for the glory of God and the common intention.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the honour and invocation of Saints.

SINCE God often ſends us inſpirations by his Angels, we ought alſo frequently to ſend back to him our aſpirations by the ſame intercourſe. The holy ſouls of the deceaſed, which are in heaven with the Angels, and are, as our Saviour ſays, Luke xx. 36. equal and like to the Angels, do alſo the ſame office of inſpiring in us, and of aſpiring for us by their holy prayers. My *Philothea*, let us join our hearts with theſe heavenly ſpirits and happy ſouls: as the young nightingales learn to ſing in company of the old, ſo by the holy aſſociation we ſhall make with the Saints, we ſhall learn to pray and to ſing the divine praiſes in a much better manner: *I will*

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ſing to thee, O Lord (ſays *David*) *in the ſight of thy Angels.* Pſ. cxxxvii. 2.

Honour, reverence and reſpect the ſacred and glorious Virgin *Mary* with an eſpecial love: She is the mother of our ſovereign Father, and conſequently our grand-mother. Let us run then to her, and as her little children, caſt ourſelves into her boſom with a perfect confidence, at all times and in all occurrences. Let us call upon this ſweet mother, let us invoke her motherly love; and endeavouring to imitate her virtues, let us have a true filial affection towards her.

Make yourſelf very familiar with the Angels; behold them often in ſpirit, who without being ſeen are preſent with you: and more particularly love and reverence the Angel of the dioceſe where you dwell, and thoſe of the perſons with whom you live, but eſpecially your own; addreſs youſelf often to them, praiſe them ordinarily, and make uſe of their aſſiſtance and ſuccour in all your affairs ſpiritual or temporal, that they may co-operate with your intentions.

The great *Peter Faber*, firſt prieſt, firſt preacher, firſt divinity reader of the holy ſociety of the name of *Jeſus*, and firſt companion of B. *Ignatius*, its founder, coming on a day out of *Germany*, where he had done great ſervices to the glory of our Lord, and paſſing through this dioceſe, the place of his birth, related, that having gone through many heretical places, he had received thouſands of conſolations from having ſaluted, in coming into each pariſh, the Angels protectors of the ſame; and that he had ſenſibly perceived them to have been favourable to him, ſometimes by preſerving him from the ambuſh of the hereticks, at other times by rendering divers ſouls more mild and tractable to receive from him the doctrine of ſalvation. And this he ſaid with ſo much recommendation of it, that a gentlewoman then very young, who heard it from his own mouth, related it but four years ago, that is to ſay, above threeſcore years after he ſpake it, with

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an extraordinary feeling. I had the comfort this laſt year to conſecrate an altar on the place where God was pleaſed this bleſſed man ſhould be born, in a little village called *Vilaret*, among our moſt craggy mountains.

Chooſe ſome particular Saints, whoſe lives you may beſt reliſh and imitate, and in whoſe interceſſion you may have a particular confidence. The Saint, whoſe name you bear, is already aſſigned you, from your baptiſm.

CHAP. XVII.

How we ought to hear and to read the word of God.

BE devout to the word of God, whether you hear it in familiar converſation, with your ſpiritual friends, or you hear it at a ſermon. Give ear to it always with attention and reverence, make all the profit you can of it, and ſuffer it not to fall to the ground, but receive it into your heart as a precious balm, imitating the moſt holy Virgin, who preſerved carefully in her heart all the words which were ſpoken in praiſe of her Son. Remember that our Lord gathers up the words we ſpeak to him in our prayers, according as we gather up thoſe he ſpeaketh to us by preaching.

Have always at hand ſome good book of devotion: ſuch as the ſpiritual works of St. *Bonaventure*, of *Gerſon*, of *Denis* the *Carthuſian*, of *Lewis Bloſius*, of *Granada*, of *Stella*, of *Arias*, of *Pinelli*, of *Du Pont*, of *Avila*, the *ſpiritual combat*, St. *Auſtin's confeſſions*, St. *Jerom's epiſtles*, and ſuch like: and read every day a little in them with great devotion; as if you were reading a letter which the Saints had ſent you from heaven to ſhew you the way, and to encourage you to come thither. Read alſo the hiſtories and lives of the Saints, in which as in a looking glaſs you may ſee the pourtraiture of a Chriſtian life; and accommodate

commodate their actions to your profit, according to your vocation. For al ho' very many actions of the Saints are not abſolutely imitable by ſuch as live in the midſt of the world, yet all of them may be in ſome degree followed, either near, or afar off. The ſolitude of St. *Paul* the firſt hermit is imitated in your ſpiritual and real retirements, of which we ſhall ſpeak, and have already ſpoken above, and the extream poverty of St. *Francis* by the practices of poverty, which we ſhall hereafter ſet down, and ſo of the reſt. It is true, there are certain hiſtories which give more light for the conduct of our lives than others do; as the life of the bleſſed mother *Tereſa*, which is admirable for this, and the lives of the firſt Jeſuits, that of S. *Charles Borromeus* archbiſhop of *Milan*, of St. *Lewis*, of St. *Bernard*, the chronicles of St. *Francis*, and others ſuch like. And there are others again which contain more matter of admiration than imitation, as the life of St. *Mary* of *Egypt*, of St. *Simeon Stylites*, of the two St. *Catharines* of *Sienna* and of *Genoa*, of St. *Angela*, and ſuch like: which nevertheleſs fail not to give us a great reliſh in general for the love of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

How we ought to receive inſpirations.

WE call inſpirations, all thoſe interior attractions, motions, reproaches, and remorſes, lights and knowledges which God works in us, preventing our heart with his bleſſings through his fatherly care and love in order to awake us, to ſtir us up, to puſh us forward and draw us to all virtues, to heavenly love, to good reſolutions, and in a word to all thoſe things which lead us on our way to our eternal well-being. This is it which the ſpouſe calls knocking at the door, and ſpeaking to the heart of his Spouſe, awaking her when ſhe ſleeps, crying and calling after her

her when ſhe is abſent, inviting her to his honey, and to gather apples and flowers in his garden, and to ſing, and to cauſe her ſweet voice to ſound in his ears.

I muſt make uſe of a ſimilitude to make you underſtand me right. To come to the full reſolution of marriage, three acts ſhould go before, with relation to the Lady who is to be married: firſt, the perſon is propoſed to her; ſecondly, ſhe entertains the propoſition; thirdly, ſhe gives her conſent: in like manner God, intending to do in us, by us, and with us, ſome act of great charity; firſt he propoſes it to us by inſpiration; ſecondly, we are pleaſed with it; and, thirdly, we give our full conſent to it. For as to deſcend to ſin, there are three ſteps, temptation, delectation and conſent; ſo there are alſo three ſteps to aſcend to virtue; inſpiration, which is oppoſite to temptation, the delectation conceived in the inſpiration, which is oppoſite to the delectation in the temptation, and the conſent to the inſpiration, which is oppoſite to the conſent given to the temptation.

Now tho' the inſpiration ſhould continue all our life long, yet ſhould we not by any means be pleaſing to God, if we took no pleaſure in it: on the contrary his divine Majeſty would be offended with it, as he was with the *Iſraelites*, to whom he had been very near for forty years, as he ſays, Pſ. xlv. ſoliciting their converſion, in all which time they would not give ear to him; whereupon he ſwore againſt them in his wrath, that they ſhould never enter into his reſt. And thus the gentleman that had a long time ſerved a young lady, would be very much diſobliged, if after all ſhe would by no means hearken to the marriage he deſired.

The pleaſure we take in inſpirations is a very great ſtep to the glory of God, and by it we begin already to pleaſe his divine Majeſty; for altho' this delight be not as yet an entire conſent, yet is it a certain diſpoſition

poſition to it; and if it be a good ſign and a thing of great profit to take pleaſure in hearing the word of God, which is as it were an exterior inſpiration, it is alſo no doubt a good thing and pleaſing to God to take delight in his internal inſpiration. Of this kind of pleaſure the ſacred Spouſe ſpeaks, Cantic. v. 6. *My ſoul was melted when my beloved ſpoke.* And thus the gentleman is already well pleaſed with the lady whom he ſerves, and eſteems himſelf favoured, when he ſees that ſhe takes delight in his ſervice.

But after all, it is the conſent which perfects the virtuous act. For if after receiving the inſpiration, and taking pleaſure in the inſpiration, we refuſe notwithſtanding to give our conſent to God; we are extreamly ungrateful, and highly offend his divine Majeſty: for it ſeems here is a greater contempt. It was this that happened to the Spouſe; for tho' the ſweet voice of her beloved had touched her heart with a holy pleaſure, yet ſhe would not open him the door, but excuſed herſelf with a frivolous reaſon; with which her Spouſe being juſtly diſpleaſed, went his way and left her. So the gentleman, who after having for a long time followed a lady and made his ſervice agreeable, ſhould at laſt be ſhaken off and deſpiſed, would have much more occaſion of diſcontent, than if his ſuit had never met with any encouragement or favour.

Reſolve, then *Philothea*, to accept with your whole heart all the inſpirations it ſhall pleaſe God to give you; and when they ſhall arrive, receive them as ambaſſadors of the King of heaven, who deſires to make a contract of marriage with you; hear peaceably their propoſitions, think well of the love with which you are inſpired, and cheriſh the holy inſpiration: conſent to the holy motion, but with an entire, amorous, and conſtant conſent; for by this means God, whom you cannot oblige, will hold himſelf greatly obliged to your good will. But before you conſent to inſpirations in things that are of great

great importance, or that are out of the ordinary way, always consult your spiritual guide, that he may examine whether the inspiration be true or false, lest you should be deceived; because the enemy, seeing a soul ready to consent to inspirations, often proposes false ones to deceive her, which he can never do, so long as she with humility obeys her conductor.

The consent being given, you must with a great care procure the effects, and hasten to put the inspiration in execution, which is the height of true virtue; for to have the consent within the heart, without coming to the effects, would be like planting a vine and not intending it should bring forth fruit.

Now what serves wonderfully to all this, is to practise the morning exercise, and those spiritual retirements, into God, which I recommended above: for by these means we prepare ourselves to do what is good, not only by a general, but also by a particular preparation.

CHAP. XIX.

Of holy confession

OUR Saviour has left to his Church the holy sacrament of penance and confession, that in it we may wash ourselves from all our iniquities, as often and as far as we shall be defiled with them. Therefore never suffer your heart, O *Philothea*, to remain any long time infected with sin, since you have so present and easy a remedy. The lioness, having been with the leopard, goes in haste to wash herself, to get rid of the stench which that copulation has left her, lest the lion coming, should be offended and provoked by it. The soul, which has consented to sin, ought to have a horror of herself, and cleanse herself as soon as possible, for the respect she ought to bear to the eyes of the divine Majesty who beholds her.

her. And why ſhould we die by the ſpiritual death, ſince we have ſo ſovereign a remedy?

Confeſs yourſelf humbly and devoutly once every week, and always if po ible before you communicate, altho' your conſcience ſhould not reproach you with the guilt of mortal ſin; for by confeſſion you ſhall not only receive the abſolution of the venial ſins you ſhall confeſs, but alſo great ſtrength to avoid them hereafter, a great light to diſcern them well, and an abundant grace to repair all the damage you have incurred by them. You will alſo practiſe the virtues of humility, of obedience, of ſincerity, and of charity; and in this one action of confeſſion, you ſhall exerciſe more virtues than in any other whatſoever.

Have always a true ſorrow for the ſins you ſhall confeſs, be they ever ſo ſmall, with a firm reſolution to amend them for the time to come. Many who confeſs their venial ſins out of cuſtom, and as it were for the ſake of order, without any thought of amendment, by this means continue all their life-time charged with them, and thus loſe many ſpiritual goods and advantages. If then you confeſs that you have ſpoken ſome word out of the way, or to have played overmuch; be ſorry for it, and have a firm purpoſe to amend. For it is an abuſe to confeſs any kind of ſin, be it mortal or venial, without a will to be delivered from it, ſince confeſſion was inſtituted for no other end.

Make none of thoſe ſuperfluous accuſations which many do by rote, viz. I have not loved God ſo much as I ought; I have not prayed with ſo much devotion as I ought; I have not cheriſhed my neighbour as I ought; I have not received the ſacraments with ſo great reverence as I ought; and the like. For in ſaying this, you will ſay nothing particular that can make your confeſſor underſtand the ſtate of your conſcience; for all the Saints in heaven and all men on earth might ſay the ſame thing if they were to come to confeſſion. See then what particular occaſion

you may have to make theſe accuſations, and when you ſhall have diſcovered it, accuſe yourſelf of the defect you have committed ſincerely and diſtinctly. For example, you accuſe yourſelf that you have not cheriſhed your neighbour, as you ought; perhaps, becauſe having ſeen ſome poor perſon in great neceſſity, whom you might eaſily have aſſiſted and comforted, you took no notice of him. Well then, in this caſe accuſe yourſelf of this paticular: and ſay, having ſeen a poor man in neceſſity, I did not aſſiſt him as I could have done, and this through negligence, or through hard-heartedneſs or contempt, according to what you ſhall know to have been the occaſion of this fault. In like manner do not accuſe yourſelf, that you have not prayed to God with ſuch devotion as you ought; but if you have admitted any voluntary diſtraction, or neglected to chuſe a proper place, or time, or poſture requiſite for keeping attention in prayer, accuſe yourſelf with all ſimplicity of that in which you ſhall find yourſelf to have been faulty, without thoſe general allegations, which are of no ſignification in confeſſion.

Content not yourſelf with telling your venial ſins, merely as to the fact; but accuſe yourſelf alſo of the motive which induced you to commit them. For example; be not content to ſay, you have told a lie without prejudice to any perſon; but declare whether it were for vain-glory, to praiſe, or to excuſe yourſelf, or out of vain mirth, or through obſtinacy. If you have ſinned in play, expreſs whether it were for the deſire of lucre, or for the pleaſure of converſation; and ſo of the reſt. Tell alſo if you have continued a long time in your ſin; for the length of the time is uſually a great aggravation of the evil, there being great difference betwixt, a paſſing vanity, which has ſlipt into the ſoul for a quarter of an hour, and one which the heart has entertained for the ſpace of a day, or two, or three. We muſt then tell the fact, the

motive

motive, and the continuance of our ſins. For tho' commonly we are not bound to be ſo punctual in declaring venial ſins, nor abſolutely obliged to confeſs them at all; yet ſuch as deſire to cleanſe well their ſouls, that they may attain to holy devotion, muſt be careful to let their ſpiritual phyſician perfectly know the evil of which they deſire to be cured, be it ever ſo ſmall.

Fail not to tell what is requiſite, that the quality of your offence may be well underſtood, as the occaſion you had to fall into a paſſion, or to ſupport any one in his vice. For example; a man, with whom I am diſpleaſed, ſhall ſay a light word to me, in jeſt, and I ſhall take it ill, and put myſelf into a paſſion on the occaſion; whereas if another, that had been agreeable to me, had ſaid ſomething more harſh, I ſhould have taken it in good part: in ſuch a caſe, I would not fail to ſay, I have broken out into angry words againſt a certain perſon, taking in ill part ſome things he ſaid to me, not ſo much for the quality of the words, as for my diſlike of the party. And if it be moreover needful to expreſs what the words were, to declare yourſelf the better, I think it would be good to declare them; for accuſing yourſelf ſo plainly, you do not only diſcover the ſin you have committed, but alſo the evil inclinations, cuſtoms, habits, and other roots of the ſin; by means of which your ghoſtly father comes to have a more perfect knowledge of the heart he treats with, and of the remedies which are moſt proper for the ſame. But you muſt always conceal the third perſon who has had any part in your ſin, as much as lies in your power.

Take heed of a number of ſins, which are apt to live and reign inſenſibly in the ſoul, to the end that you may confeſs them, and may be able to purge yourſelf of them; and to this purpoſe read attentively the 6th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 35th, and 36th chapters of

of the third part, and the 7th chapter of the fourth part.

Change not eaſily your confeſſor; but having made choice of one, continue to give him an account of your conſcience on the days which are appointed for it, telling him freely and ſincerely the ſins you have committed, and from time to time, as from month to month, or from two months to two months; tell him alſo the ſtate of your inclinations, though you have not ſinned by them; for inſtance if you ſhould be tormented with ſadneſs, or with melancholy, or if you ſhould be inclined to mirth, or to the deſires of acquiring worldly goods; and ſuch like inclinations.

CHAP. XX.

Of frequent communion.

IT is ſaid that *Mithridates* King of *Pontus*, having invented the mithridate, ſo ſtrengthened his body by it, that afterwards endeavouring to poiſon himſelf, to avoid the ſervitude of the *Romans*, he could not poſſibly do it. Our Saviour has inſtituted the moſt venerable ſacrament of the *Euchariſt*, which contains really his fleſh and his blood, to the end that he who eats it, ſhould live eternally. Whoſoever therefore uſeth it often with devotion, ſo confirmeth the health, and the life of his ſoul, that it is almoſt impoſſible he ſhould be poiſoned with any kind of evil affection. We cannot be nouriſhed with this fleſh of life, and live with the affections of death. So that as men, dwelling in the terreſtrial paradiſe, might have avoided corporal death by the virtue of the fruit of the tree of life, which God had planted there, ſo may they alſo avoid ſpiritual death, by the virtue of this ſacrament of life. If the moſt tender fruits, and ſuch as are moſt ſubject to corruption, as cherries, ſtrawberries and apricocks, are eaſily preſerved all the year with ſugar

ſugar or honey; it is no wonder if our hearts, however frail and weak, are preſerved from the corruption of ſin, when they are ſugared and ſweetened with the incorruptible fleſh and blood of the Son of God. O *Philothea*, the Chriſtians that ſhall be damned, ſhall not be able to make any reply, when the juſt Judge ſhall ſhew them the wrong they did themſelves in dying ſpiritually, ſince it was ſo eaſy to them to have maintained themſelves in life and in health, by the eating of his body, which he had left them for that intention. Miſerable wretches! (will he ſay) why did you die, having the fruit and the food of life at your command?

To receive the communion of the Euchariſt every day, I neither commend, nor diſcommend: but to communicate every Lord's day, I perſuade and exhort every one, provided his ſoul be without any affection to ſin. Theſe are the very words of St. *Auſtin*, with whom I neither blame nor abſolutely praiſe the communicating every day, but leave that to the diſcretion of the ghoſtly father of him that would be reſolved in this point: For as the diſpoſition required for ſuch frequent communion ought to be very exquiſite, it is not good to adviſe it generally to all; and as this diſpoſition, how perfect ſoever, may be found in many holy ſouls, it is not good neither to divert or diſſuade generally all perſons from it; but this ſhould be regulated by the conſideration of the inward ſtate of every one in particular. It would be imprudent to adviſe every one without diſtinction to this frequent communion; but it would be imprudent alſo to blame any one for it, eſpecially if he followed in this the advice of a worthy director. The anſwer of St. *Catharine* of *Sienna*, was graceful, when it was objected againſt her often communicating, that St. *Auſtin* did neither praiſe nor blame communicating every day; Well (ſaid ſhe) ſince St. *Auſtin* blamed it not, I pray do not you blame it, and I ſhall be content.

But St. *Auſtin*, as you ſee, *Philothea*, exhorts and ſtrongly adviſes to communicate every *Sunday:* do ſo then as much as you ſhall be able; for ſince, as I ſuppoſe, you have no ſort of affection to mortal ſin, nor any affection of venial ſin, you are in the true diſpoſition which St. *Auſtin* requires; yea, and in a more excellent one; becauſe you not only have no affection to commit ſin, but have not even in you the affection of ſin: ſo that if your ghoſtly father thought it fit, you might profitably communicate ſtill more frequent than every *Sunday*.

However many lawful impediments may befal you, not on your own part, but on the part of them, with whom you live, which may give occaſion to a diſcreet guide to adviſe you not to communicate ſo often. As for example; if you live in any kind of ſubjection, and thoſe to whom you owe obedience or reſpect are ſo ill inſtructed, or ſo humorous, that they are troubled or diſquieted to ſee you communicate ſo often; perhaps all things conſidered, it would be good to condeſcend in ſome meaſure to theſe people's infirmity, and to communicate but once a fortnight; but this is to be underſtood when you can by no means overcome this difficulty. It is hard to give a general rule in this caſe: we muſt do what our ghoſtly Father ſhall adviſe, tho' I may ſay with aſſurance that the greateſt diſtance between the times of communicating, for ſuch as deſire to ſerve God devoutly, is from month to month.

If you are prudent, neither father nor mother, huſband nor wife, will hinder you from communicating often: for ſince on the day of your communion you will not neglect to take all care, that is ſuitable to your condition, and that on this occaſion you will be more meek, and more obſervant in their regard, and will not refuſe them any duties whatſoever, there is no likelihood that they ſhould ſeek to divert you from this exerciſe, which will bring no kind of inconvenience to them, except they ſhould be of a ſpirit extremely

extremely froward and unreaſonable; for in that caſe, as I have ſaid, perhaps your director will adviſe you to uſe ſome condeſcendance.

I muſt ſay a word for married people: In the ancient law, God diſapproved, that creditors ſhould exact their debts upon feſtival days, but he never diſapproved, that debtors ſhould pay and reſtore what they owed to ſuch as exacted it. It is an indecency, tho' not a great ſin, to ſollicit the payment of the marriage debt, on the day that one has communicated. But it is no indecency, but rather a meritorious thing to pay it. Wherefore no one ought to be debarred from the communion, for paying this debt, if otherwiſe their devotion incite them to deſire it. In the primitive Church chriſtians communicated every day, although they were married, and bleſſed with generation of children: and for this cauſe I ſaid, that frequent communions brings no manner of inconvenience to parents, huſband or wife, provided the party that communicates be prudent and diſcreet. As for bodily diſeaſes, there are none which can be a lawful impediment to this holy devotion, excepting only that which provokes to frequent vomiting.

To communicate every eight days, it is requiſite that one ſhould be without mortal ſin and without any affection to venial ſin, and have a great deſire of the holy communion. But to communicate every day, it is morover neceſſary to have overcome the greateſt part of our evil inclinations, and that it ſhould be by the advice of our ſpiritual father.

CHAP. XXI.

How we ought to communicate.

BEGIN to prepare yourſelf for the holy communion the evening before, by many aſpirations and ejaculations of love, retiring ſooner, that you may

alſo riſe ſooner in the morning. If you ſhould awake in the night, fill preſently your heart and your mouth with ſome odoriferous words, by means of which your ſoul may be perfumed to receive your Spouſe, who being awake while you are aſleep, prepares himſelf to bring you a thouſand graces and favours, if on your part you are diſpoſed to receive them. In the morning riſe up with great joy, for the happineſs you hope for; and having confeſſed, go with a great confidence, but with great humility alſo, to receive this heavenly meat, which nouriſhes you to immortality. And after you have repeated the ſacred words, (*Lord I am not worthy*, &c.) move not your head or lips any more, either to pray, or to ſigh, but opening your mouth gently and moderately, and lifting up your head as much as is needful, that the prieſt may ſee what he is doing, full of faith, hope, and charity, receive him, whom, in whom, by whom, and for whom you believe, hope, and love. O *Philothea*, repreſent to yourſelf, that as the bee, having gathered from the flowers the dew of heaven, and the choiceſt juice of the earth, and having reduced it into honey, carries it into her hive: ſo the prieſt, having taken from the altar the Saviour of the world, the true Son of God, who, as the dew is deſcended from heaven, and the true Son of the Virgin, who, as a flower, is ſprung from the earth of our humanity, he puts him as delicious meat into your mouth and body.

Having received him, ſtir up your heart to come to do homage to this king of ſalvation: treat with him of your internal affairs, conſider him within you, where he has placed himſelf for your happineſs. To conlude, make him as welcome as you poſſibly can, and carry yourſelf in ſuch manner, as that it may be known by all your actions, that God is with you.

But when you cannot have this benefit of communicating really at the holy maſs, communicate at leaſt

leaſt in heart and ſpirit, uniting yourſelf by an ardent deſire to this life-giving fleſh of our Saviour.

Your great intention in the communion ſhould be to advance, comfort, and ſtrengthen yourſelf in the love of God. For you muſt receive for love, that which love alone cauſed to be given to you. You cannot conſider our Saviour in an action either more full of love or more tender than this, in which he annihilates himſelf, as we may ſay, and changes himſelf into meat, that ſo he may penetrate our ſouls, and unite himſelf moſt intimately to the heart and to the body of his faithful.

If worldings aſk you, why you communicate ſo often; tell them it is to learn to love God, to purify yourſelf from your imperfections, to be delivered from your miſeries, to be comforted in your afflictions, and to be upheld in your weakneſſes. Tell them that two ſorts of perſons ought to communicate often, the perfect, becauſe being well diſpoſed, they would be much in the wrong not to approach to the ſource and fountain of perfection; and the imperfect, to the end that that they may be able juſtly to pretend to perfection: the ſtrong, leſt they ſhould become weak; and the weak, that they may become ſtrong: the ſick, that they may be healed; and they that are well leſt they ſhould fall into ſickneſs: and that for your part, as being imperfect, weak, and ſick, you have need to communicate often with him who is your perfection, your ſtrength and your phyſician. Tell them, that ſuch as have not many worldly affairs ought to communicate often, becauſe they have the convenience; and ſuch as have many worldly affairs, becauſe they have need of it; and that he who labours much, and is loaded with pains, ought alſo to eat ſolid meats, and that frequently. Tell them, that you receive the holy ſacrament, to learn to receive it well; becauſe one hardly performs an action well, which one does not often practiſe.

Communicate often, *Philothea*, and as often as you can, with the advice of your ghoſtly father, and believe me. Hares in our mountains become white in winter, becauſe they neither ſee nor eat any thing but ſnow: ſo, by approaching to and eating beauty, goodneſs, and purity itſelf in this divine ſacrament, you will become quite fair, quite good, and quite pure.

The

THE

THIRD PART

OF THE

INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING

MANY ADVICES

Conerning the Exerciſe of VIRTUES.

CHAP. I.

Of the choice we ought to make as to the exerciſe of virtues.

THE king of the bees goes not out into the fields, without being ſurrounded with all his little people: and charity never comes into the heart, without bringing in with her the whole train of other virtues, exerciſing and employing them, as a captain does his ſoldiers. But ſhe employs them not all at once, nor all alike, nor in all ſeaſons, nor in every place: For the juſt man is like a tree which is planted by the running waters, which brings forth its fruit in due ſeaſon; becauſe charity watering the ſoul, brings forth in her the works of virtue, every one in their proper time. *Muſick, however agreeable in itſelf, is out of ſeaſon in time of mourning*, ſays the proverb. It is a great fault in many, who under

taking the exercise of some particular virtue, will needs produce the acts of it, in all sorts of occurrences, and, like some ancient philosophers, will either always weep or always laugh; and which is yet worse, they blame and censure such as do not always like themselves exercise the same virtues. We should rejoice with the joyful, and weep with them that weep, says the apostle. And charity, says he, is patient, she is kind, she is bountiful, she is discreet and condescending.

There are nevertheless some virtues, the use of which is almost universal; and which ought not only to exercise their own acts apart, but ought to communicate also their qualities to the acts of all other virtues. Occasions are seldom presented to exercise fortitude, magnanimity and magnificence; but meekness, temperance, modesty, and humility, are certain virtues with which all the actions of our life ought to be tempered. It is true, there are virtues more excellent than these, but then the use of these is more necessary. Sugar is more excellent than salt, but the use of salt is more frequent and general. We must always therefore have a good and ready provision of these general virtues, since we must use them almost continually.

Among the exercises of virtues, we ought to prefer that which is most conformable to our duty, not that which is most agreeable to our imagination. St. *Paula* was carried by her inclination to exercise the austerities of corporal mortifications, that she might more easily enjoy spiritual comforts; but she had a greater obligation to obey her superiors; and therefore St. *Jerome* owns she was to be blamed for using immoderate abstinences against her bishop's advice. The apostles, on the other hand, being commissioned to preach the gospel, and to distribute the bread of heaven to souls, judged exceeding well, that they should do wrong to interrupt this holy exercise for taking care of the poor, however otherwise an excellent

cellent virtue. Every calling has need of practiſing ſome peculiar virtue. The virtues of a prelate are of one kind, theſe of a prince are of another; thoſe of a ſoldier are of another; thoſe a married woman are of another, and thoſe of a widow are of another: and although all ought to have all the virtues, yet all are not bound to exerciſe them equally, but each one ought to give himſelf in a more particular manner to thoſe virtues which are requiſite for the kind of life to which he is called.

Among the virtues which concern not our particular duty, we muſt prefer the moſt excellent, and not the moſt ſhewy. Comets ordinarily ſpeaking appear greater than the ſtars, and take up much more place in our eyes, whereas indeed they are neither in greatneſs nor quality comparable to the ſtars; and only ſeem great becauſe they are nearer to us, and in a more groſs ſubject in compariſon to the ſtars: ſo there are certain virtues which, becauſe they are near us, more ſenſible and (if I may ſo ſay) more material, are highly eſteemed and always preferred by the vulgar: ſo commonly they prefer corporal alms before ſpiritual; the hair-ſhirt, faſting, going barefoot, uſing the diſcipline, and other ſuch mortifications of the body, before meekneſs, mildneſs, modeſty, and other mortifications of the heart; which notwithſtanding are much the more excellent. Chooſe then, *Philothea*, the beſt virtues, not the moſt eſteemed; the moſt excellent, not the moſt apparent; thoſe that are better indeed, not thoſe that are more gaudy.

It is profitable, that every one ſhould chooſe a particular exerciſe of ſome one virtue, not ſo as to abandon the reſt, but to keep his ſpirit in a more ſettled order and employment. A fair young virgin, more bright than the ſun, in royal attire, and crowned with a crown of olives, appeared to St. *John* biſhop of *Alexandria*, and ſaid to him; I am the eldeſt daughter of the king, if thou canſt have me for thy friend, I ſhall conduct thee to his preſence. He underſtood, that this was mercy towards the poor, which

God

God recommended to him; and therefore ever after he gave himſelf in ſuch manner to the exerciſe of this virtue, as that he is generally called St. *John* the almoner. *Eulogius* the *Alexandrian*, deſiring to do ſome particular ſervice to God, and not having ſtrength enough to embrace a ſolitary life, nor to give himſelf up to the obedience of another, took into his houſe a poor wretch quite eaten up with the leproſy, that he might exerciſe in his regard his charity and mortification; and, to perform this more worthily, he made a vow to honour him, treat him, and ſerve him, as a ſervant does his lord and maſter: now upon ſome temptation happening as well to the leper as to *Eulogius*, to depart one from the other, they addreſſed themſelves to the great St. *Antony*, who ſaid to them; Take care, my children, not to part from one another, for being both of you near your end, if the angel ſhould not find you together, you run a great riſk of loſing your crowns.

The king St. *Lewis* viſited hoſpitals, and ſerved the ſick with his own hands, as if he had ſerved for wages. St. *Francis* had an extraordinary love for poverty, which he called his lady; and St. *Dominick*, for preaching, from which his order takes its name. St. *Gregory* the Great took pleaſure in entertaining pilgrims, following the example of the great *Abraham*, and like him received the King of Glory in the form of a pilgrim. *Tobie* exerciſed his charity in burying the dead. St. *Elizabeth*, as great a princeſs as ſhe was, delighted in nothing ſo much as in abaſing herſelf. St. *Catharine* of *Genua*, in her widowhood, dedicated herſelf to ſerve an hoſpital. *Caſſian* relates, that a devout gentlewoman, deſirous to exerciſe the virtue of patience, came to St. *Athanaſius*, who at her requeſt placed with her a poor widow, that was exceeding peeviſh, cholerick, troubleſome and inſupportable; who by her perpetual thwarting and ſcolding the good lady, gave her occaſion enough to exerciſe worthily both her meekneſs and charity.

And

And thus among the ſervants of God, ſome apply themſelves to ſerve the ſick, others to relieve the poor, others to procure the advancement of the knowledge of the Chriſtian doctrine amongſt children; others to bring back ſouls that are loſt and gone aſtray, others to adorn churches and deck altars, others to bring about peace and concord among men. In which they imitate embroiderers, who upon divers grounds, lay with admirable variety, ſilk, ſilver and gold, to make all ſorts of flowers: for ſo theſe godly ſouls, who undertake ſome particular exerciſe of devotion, make it ſerve them as a ground for their ſpiritual embroidery, on which they work with the variety of all other virtues; holding by that means all their actions and affections better united and ordered, by referring them to their principal exerciſe; and thus they ſhew forth their ſpirit in its gilded coathing, ſurrounded with variety, Pſalm xliv. 10.

When we are aſſaulted by any vice, we muſt as much as is poſſible, embrace the practice of the contrary virtue, and refer all the others to this; for by this means we ſhall overcome our enemy, and at the ſame time advance ourſelves in all the virtues. Thus if I am aſſaulted by pride or by anger, I muſt in all I do lean and turn myſelf on the ſide of humility and meekneſs; and make all my other exerciſes of prayer, of the ſacraments, of prudence, of conſtancy, and ſobriety, ſubſervient to this end. For, as, the wild boars, to ſharpen their tuſks, whet and poliſh them with their other teeth, which alſo by this means are all of them filed and ſharpened: ſo a virtuous man, having undertaken to perfect himſelf in that virtue, of which he has moſt need for its defence, ought to file and poliſh it by the exerciſe of the other virtues, which whilſt they help to refine that one, do all of them by that means become more excellent, and better poliſhed. As it happened to *Job*, who exerciſing himſelf particularly in patience, againſt ſo many temptations-

tions with which he was toſſed about, became perfectly holy and virtuous, in all kind of virtues. Yea, it has come to paſs, as St. *Gregory Nazianzen* ſays, that by one only act of ſome virtue, well and perfectly exerciſed, a perſon has attained to the height of virtues. For which he alledges *Rahab*, who having exactly practiſed the office of hoſpitality, arrived at a very great glory. But this is to be underſtood, when ſuch an act is excellently practiſed with great fervour and charity.

CHAP. II.

A continuation of the former diſcourſe, about the choice of virtues.

SAINT *Auſtin* excellently ſays, that young beginners in devotion commit certain faults which, according to the rigour of the laws of perfection, are blameable, and yet are commendable for the good preſage they give of a future excellency in piety, to which they ſerve as a diſpoſition. That low and ſervile fear which begets exceſſive ſcruples in the ſouls of them that are newly come out from a courſe of ſin, is a commendable quality in beginners, and a certain preſage of a future purity of conſcience: but this ſame fear would be blameable in thoſe who are far advanced, in whoſe heart love ought to reign, which by little and little chaſes away this kind of ſervile fear.

St. *Bernard* in his beginnings was full of rigour and auſterity towards them that put themſelves under his conduct, to whom he declared at firſt that they muſt leave the body behind them, and come to him only with the ſpirit. When he heard their confeſſions, he deteſted with an extraordinarity ſeverity all kind of faults, were they ever ſo ſmall; and ſo preſſed on theſe poor novices to perfection, that in ſeeking to puſh them forward, he drew them back, for they loſt heart and breath, to ſee themſelves ſo earneſtly preſſed

up

up ſo ſteep and ſo high an aſcent. Obſerve, *Philothea*, it was a moſt ardent zeal for a perfect purity which incited this great Saint to this way of proceeding, and this zeal was a great virtue, but a virtue nevertheleſs which was reprehenſible; and God himſelf in a holy viſion brought him to a ſenſe of it, pouring into his ſoul a meek, ſweet, amiable and tender ſpirit; by means of which, being wholly changed, he accuſed himſelf very much of his former rigour and ſeverity, and became ſo gracious and condeſcending to every one, that he made himſelf all to all, that he might gain them all. St. *Jerome* having related how St. *Paula* his dear daughter was not only exceſſive, but obſtinate in the exerciſe of bodily mortification, ſo that ſhe would not yield to the contrary advice, which *Epiphanius* her biſhop had given her in that reſpect; and moreover, that ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be carried away in ſuch manner with grief for the death of her friends, that ſhe was always on thoſe occaſions in danger of dying herſelf, concludes at length with theſe words: Some will ſay, that inſtead of writing the praiſes of this holy woman, I write reprehenſions and diſpraiſes, but I call *Jeſus* to witneſs whom ſhe ſerved, and whom I deſire to ſerve, that I ly not either on the one ſide, or on the other, but ſet down ſincerely what related to her, as one chriſtian ſhould do of another; that is to ſay, I write a hiſtory of her, not a panegyrick, and that her vices are the virtues of others. His meaning is, that the failings and defects of St. *Paula* would have held the place of virtue in a ſoul leſs perfect: as in truth, there are actions which are eſteemed imperfections in ſuch as are perfect, but would be held great perfections in thoſe who are imperfect. It is a good ſign in a ſick man, when at the end of his ſickneſs his legs ſwell, for this ſhews that nature, now growing ſtronger, caſts out the ſuperfluous humours; but this ſame would be a bad ſign in one that were not ſick; for it would ſhew that nature has not ſtrength enough to

reſolve

reſolve and diſſipate the humours. My *Philothea*, we we muſt have a good opihion of thoſe in whom we ſee the practice of virtues, though with imperfection, ſince the Saints themſelves have often practiſed them in this manner. But as for ourſelves we muſt have a care to exerciſe ourſelves in them, not only faithfully, but diſcreetly: and to that end, we muſt obſerve ſtrictly the advice of the wiſe man, not to rely on our own prudence, but on the judgment of ſuch as God has given us for conductors.

There are cettain things which by many are eſteemed virtues, but which indeed are none at all; of theſe I muſt ſpeak to you a word or two; I mean extaſies, or raptures, inſenſibilities, impaſſibilities, deifical unions, elevations, transformations, and other ſuch like perfections, of which certain books treat; which promiſe to elevate the ſoul, to a contemplation purely intellectual, to an eſſential application of the ſpirit, and a ſupereminent life. Obſerve well, *Philothea*, theſe perfections are not virtues, they are rather the recompences, that God gives for virtues; or yet rather ſmall patterns of the felicities of the life to come, which ſometimes are preſented to men, to make them in love with the whole pieces which are above in heaven.

But we muſt not for all that pretend to ſuch favours, ſince they are no way neceſſary to the ſerving well and the loving of God, which ſhould be our only pretenſion: neither are they favours that can commonly be obtained by our labour and induſtry, ſince they are rather paſſions than actions, which we may indeed receive, but cannot produce in ourſelves. I add, that we have only undertaken to render ourſelves good and devout godly men, or godly women, therefore we muſt apply ourſelves earneſtly to this; but if it pleaſe God to elevate us to theſe angelical perfections, we ſhall be then alſo good Angels; but in the mean time let us exerciſe ourſelves, ſimply,

humbly,

humbly, and devoutly in thoſe lower virtues, the winning of which our Saviour hath propoſed to our care and labour, ſuch as patience, meekneſs, mortification of the heart, humility, obedience, poverty, chaſtity, tenderheſs towards our neighbours, bearing with their imperfections, diligence, and holy fervour. Let us willingly leave thoſe ſupereminences for highly elevated ſouls; we merit not ſo high a rank in God's ſervice; too happy ſhall we be to ſerve him in his kitchen, in his pantry, and to be his domeſticks in lower ſtations; it will be his goodneſs, if afterwards he thinks proper to bring us into his cabinet and privy-council. Yea, *Philothea*, for this King of glory does not recompenſe his ſervants according to the dignity of the offices they exerciſe, but according to the meaſure of the love and humility with which they exerciſe them. *Saul*, ſeeking the aſſes of his father, found the kingdom of *Iſrael*. *Rebecca*, watering the camels of *Abraham*, became the ſpouſe of his Son. *Ruth*, gleaning after the reapers of *Booz*, and laying down at his feet, was advanced to his ſide, and made his wife. Certainly ſuch high and elevated pretenſions to ſo extraordinary things are very ſubject to illuſions, deceits, and falſities; and it happens ſometimes, that thoſe who think themſelves Angels, are not ſo much as good men, and that in their regard there is more ſublimity in the words and terms they make uſe of, than in their way of thinking and acting. Yet muſt we not deſpiſe or raſhly cenſure any thing; but bleſſing God for the ſupereminence of others, keep ourſelves humble in our lower but ſafer way, leſs eminent, but more ſuitable to our inſufficiency and littleneſs; in which if we converſe humbly and faithfully, God will elevate us to greatneſſes, that are very great indeed.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of patience.

PATIENCE is neceſſary for you, that in doing the will of God, you may receive the promiſe, ſays the apoſtle, Heb. x. 36. Yea, for as our Saviour himſelf has pronounced, Luke xxi. 19. *In your patience you ſhall poſſeſs your ſouls.* Man's great happineſs, *Philothea*, is to poſſeſs his ſoul; and the more perfect our patience is, the more perfectly do we poſſeſs our ſouls. Call to mind often that our Lord has ſaved us by ſuffering and enduring, and that we ought alſo to work out our ſalvation by ſufferings and afflictions, enduring injuries, contradictions and diſpleaſures, with all the meekneſs we can.

Limit not your patience to ſuch and ſuch kind of injuries and afflictions, but extend it univerſally to all thoſe, that God ſhall ſend, and ſhall ſuffer to befall you. There are ſome that are not willing to ſuffer any other tribulations but ſuch as are honourable; as for example, to be wounded in battle, to be priſoners of war, to be treated ill for religion, to be impoveriſhed by ſome lawſuit in which they got the upperhand: now theſe people do not love the tribulation, but the honour that it brings. He that is patient indeed, and a true ſervant of God, ſuffers indifferently the tribulations accompanied with ignominy, and thoſe that are honourable. To be deſpiſed, reprehended, and accuſed by evil men, is but a pleaſure to a man of a good heart; but to be blamed, accuſed, and ill treated by them that are good, by our friends, by our relations, there is the true trial of goodneſs. I eſteem more the meekneſs with which the great St. *Charles Boromæus* ſuffered a long time the publick reprehenſions, that a great preacher of a ſtrictly reformed order uttered againſt him in the pulpit, than all the aſſaults he received from others: for juſt as the

ſtinging

ſtinging of bees is far more painful than that of flies; ſo the evil we ſuffer from good men, and the oppoſitions they make againſt us, are much more inſupportable than others; and yet it happens very often, that two good men, having both of them good intentions, through the diverſity of their ways of thinking, raiſe great perſecutions and contradictions one againſt the other.

Be patient, not only with regard to the ſubſtance and the principal of the afflictions which ſhall befall you, but alſo with regard to their acceſſaries and accidental attendants. Many could be content to meet with evils, ſo they might not be incommoded by them. I am not vexed, ſays one, that I am become poor, but only that by this means I am diſabled to ſerve my friends, to give my children proper education, and to live as honourably as I could wiſh I would not care, ſays another, were it not that the world will think, this is come upon me through my own fault. Another would be content the world ſhould ſpeak ill of him, and would ſuffer it very patiently, ſo that no one would believe the detractor. There are others, that are willing to ſuffer ſome part of the inconvenience of the evil, as they think, but not to bear it all: they do not fret themſelves, ſay they, that they are ſick, but that they want money to get themſelves cured, or that they are ſo great a trouble to thoſe that are about them. Now I ſay, *Philothea*, we muſt have patience, not only to be ſick, but to be ſick of that diſeaſe which God wills, and in that place where he wills, and amongſt ſuch perſons as he wills, and with thoſe inconveniencies which he wills; and ſo of other tribulations. When any evil ſhall happen to you, apply ſuch remedies as ſhall be in your power and according to God: for to do otherwiſe, would be to tempt his divine majeſty; but then having done this, wait with an entire reſignation for the ſucceſs it ſhall pleaſe God to ſend: if it pleaſe him that the remedies overcome the evil, give him thanks with humility; if it ſhould pleaſe him that the evil ſhould overcomethe remedies, bleſs him with patience.

I am

I am for following the advice of St. *Gregory*: When you ſhall be juſtly accuſed of any fault you have committed, humble yourſelf very much, and confeſs that you deſerve more than the accuſation which is brought againſt you: but if the accuſation be falſe, excuſe yourſelf meekly, denying yourſelf to be guilty; for you owe this reverence to the truth, and to the edification of your neighbour. But if, after your true and lawful excuſe, men continue to accuſe you, trouble not yourſelf, nor ſtrive to get your excuſe admitted; for having done your duty to truth, you muſt do it alſo to humility. And by this means you ſhall neither offend againſt the care you ought to have of your reputation, nor the love you owe to tranquility, meekneſs of heart, and humility.

Complain as little as you can of the wrongs done you; for it is certain that, commonly ſpeaking, he that complains, ſins; foraſmuch as our ſelf-love ever makes us believe the injuries done us to be greater than they are: but above all things make not your complaints to ſuch perſons as are prone to paſſion and to think ill. But if it be expedient to make your complaint to any one, either to remedy the offence, or to quiet your mind, let it be done to ſouls that are calm, and who truly love God: for otherwiſe inſtead of eaſing your heart, they will provoke it to greater uneaſineſſes; and inſtead of pulling out the thorn that pricketh you, they will drive it deeper into your foot.

Many being ſick, afflicted, or offended by any one, refrain from complaining or ſhewing a tenderneſs. For this as they judge, truly, would evidently teſtify a great want of fortitude and generoſity; but yet they deſire extremely, and by divers artifices ſeek that others, ſhould pity them, ſhould have a great compaſſion for them, and ſhould not only think them afflicted, but alſo patient and courageous. Now this is truly a patience, but a falſe patience, which in effect

fect is nothing elſe but a very ſubtil and refined ambition and vanity. *They have glory*, (ſays the apoſtle) *but not with God.* The true patient man neither complains himſelf of his evil, nor deſires to be bemoaned by others; he ſpeaks of it plainly as it is, with truth and ſincerity, without bemoaning himſelf, without complaining, without aggravating the matter. If he be pitied, he patiently ſuffers himſelf to be pitied, unleſs they pity him for ſome evil which he has not; for then will he modeſtly declare, that he ſuffers not that evil, and in this manner he continues peaceable betwixt truth and patience, confeſſing the evil but not complaining of it.

In the contradictions which ſhall befall you in the exerciſe of devotion (for this ſhall not fail to happen) remember the words of our Lord, St. John xvi. 21. *A woman when ſhe is in labour hath ſorrow becauſe her hour is come; but when ſhe hath brought forth her child, ſhe remembereth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a man is born into the world.* For you have conceived in your ſoul the nobleſt child in the world, to wit, Jeſus Chriſt, and until he be quite brought forth, you cannot but ſuffer in your labour: but be of good courage, theſe ſorrows once paſt, everlaſting joy ſhall remain with you, for having brought forth ſuch a man into the world. Now he ſhall be wholly brought forth for you, when you ſhall have formed him entirely in your heart and in your works by the imitation of his life.

When you ſhall be ſick offer up all your griefs, pains and uneaſineſſes, to the ſervice of our Lord, and beſeech him to unite them with the torments which he ſuffered for you. Obey your phyſician, take your medicines, meats and other remedies, for the love of God, remembering the gall he took for the love of us: deſire to be cured, that you may ſerve him; but refuſe not to continue ſick, that you may obey him; and diſpoſe yourſelf to die if ſo it pleaſe him, that you may praiſe him and enjoy him.

Remember

Remember that the bees, at the time when they are making their honey, live upon a bitter proviſion, and that we in like manner, can never perform acts of greater ſweetneſs and patience, nor better compoſe the honey of excellent virtues, than while we are eating the bread of bitterneſs, and live in the midſt of afflictions. And as the honey which is gathered from the flowers of thyme (a little bitter herb) is the beſt of all; ſo the virtue which is exerciſed in the bitterneſs of the meaneſt, loweſt, and moſt abject tribulations, is the moſt excellent of all.

Look often with your interior eyes on Chriſt Jeſus crucified, naked, blaſphemed, ſlandered, forſaken, and in a word, overwhelmed with all ſorts of troubles, ſorrows, and labours; and conſider, that all your ſufferings, neither in quality nor quantity, are any ways comparable to his, and that you ſhall never ſuffer any thing for him, equal to that which he has endured for you.

Conſider the torments which the martyrs have ſuffered heretofore, and thoſe which many now endure, more grievous without any proportion than yours, and ſay; Alas, my ſufferings are conſolations, and my pains are pleaſures, in compariſon of thoſe who without any relief, aſſiſtance, or mitigation, live in a continual death, overcharged with afflictions infinitely greater than mine.

CHAP IV.

Of exterior humility.

BORROW empty veſſels not a few, ſaid *Eliſeus* to the poor widow, 4 Kings iv. 3. *and pour oil into them.* To receive the grace of God into our hearts, we muſt procure that they be void of vainglory. The keſtrel crying, and looking on the birds of prey, affrights them by a ſecret property and virtue, therefore the doves love her above all other birds,

birds, and live in ſecurity with her: ſo humility repels Satan, and preſerves in us the grace and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; and therefore all the Saints, but particularly the King of Saints and his mother, have always honoured and cheriſhed this bleſſed virtue more than any other amongſt the moral ones. We call that glory *vain*, which we take to ourſelves, either for that which is not in us, or for that which is in us, but is not our's, or for that which is in us, and is ours, but deſerves not that we ſhould glory in it. The nobility of our race, the favour of great ones, and popular honour, are things which are not in us, but either in our progenitors, or in the eſteem of other men. Some there are that become proud and inſolent, by being upon a good horſe, or for having a feather in their hat, or by wearing a fine ſuit of cloaths; but who ſees not the folly of this? for if there be any glory in theſe things, it belongs to the horſe, the bird, and the taylor; and what a meanneſs of heart it is to borrow eſteem from a horſe, from a feather, or ſome fooliſh new faſhion. Others eſteem and value themſelves for their high muſtaches, or for a well trimmed beard, for their curled locks, or for their ſoft hands, or becauſe they can dance, ſing or play; but are not theſe mean-ſpirited men, who ſeek to raiſe their worth, and to enhance their reputation by ſuch frivolous and fooliſh things? Others, for a little learning, would be honoured and reſpected by all the world, as if every one ought to come to ſchool to them, and account them their maſters; and therefore they are called pedants. Others ſtrut like peacocks with the conceit of their beauty, and think all the world in love with them. All this is extremely vain, fooliſh, and impertinent; and the glory, which is taken from ſuch weak occaſions, is called vain, ſenſeleſs and frivolous.

True good is known as true balm; for balm is tried by dropping it into water; if it ſinks to the bottom, and keeps beneath, it is counted the moſt

excellent and precious: even ſo to know whether a man be truly wiſe, learned, generous and noble, obſerve whether the good things in him tend to humility, modeſty and ſubmiſſion; for then they ſhall be good indeed: but if they ſwim above water, and ſtrive to appear, they ſhall be goods ſo much the leſs true, by how much the more they appear. Pearls that are conceived and nouriſhed by the wind, or by the noiſe of thunder, have nothing but the outſide of pearl, and are void of ſubſtance: ſo the virtues and good qualities of men, which are bred and nouriſhed in pride, in oſtentation and in vanity, have nothing but a mere appearance of good, without juice, without marrow, and without ſolidity.

Honours, ranks, and dignities, are like ſaffron, which proſpers beſt, and grows moſt plentifully, when it is trodden under feet. It is no honour to be beautiful, when a man prizes himſelf for it: beauty, to have a good grace, ſhould be neglected; learning diſhonours us, when it puffs us up, and degenerates into pedantry.

If we ſtand upon the punctilio for places, precedences, and titles, beſides that we expoſe our qualities to be examined, tried, and contradicted, we make them vile and contemptible; for honour which is beautiful, when it is freely given, becomes baſe when it is exacted, ſought for, and required. When the peacock ſpreads his tail, to behold himſelf, in raiſing up his fair feathers, he ruffles all the reſt and diſcovers his deformities. Flowers which are fair whilſt they grow on the earth, wither away when they are handled. And as they that ſmell the mandrakes at a diſtance, and only in paſſing by, perceive a moſt agreeable odour, but they that ſmell to them near, and a long time, become ſtupified and ſick: even ſo honours give a pleaſant ſatisfaction to thoſe that ſmell them afar off and ſlightly without ſtaying to amuſe themſelves with them, or to be earneſt about them;

but

but ſuch as affect them, and feed on them, are very much to be blamed and worthy of reprehenſion.

The purſuit and love of virtue begins to make us virtuous, but the purſuit and love of honour begins to make us contemptible and worthy of blame. Generous minds amuſe not themſelves about theſe petty toys of rank, of honour and ſalutations: they have other things to do; that is only the property of degenerate ſpirits.

He that may have pearls, never loads himſelf with ſhells; and ſuch as aſpire to virtue, trouble not themſelves about honours. Every one indeed may take and keep his own place without prejudice to humility, ſo that it be done careleſsly, and without contention. For as they that come from *Peru*, beſides the gold and ſilver they take from thence, bring alſo apes, and parrots, becauſe they neither coſt much, nor are burthenſome to their ſhip: ſo they that aſpire to virtue neglect not to take the rank and honour due to them; yet ſo, if it coſt them not much care and attention, and that it may be without incurring trouble, uneaſineſs, diſputes and contentions. Nevertheleſs I do not here ſpeak of thoſe whoſe dignity concerns the publick, nor of certain particular occaſions on which great conſequences depend; for in theſe every one ought to keep what belongs to him with prudence and diſcretion, accompanied with charity and courteſy.

CHAP. V.

Of more internal humility.

BUT you deſire, *Philothea*, to be conducted ſtill farther into humility; for to do what I have hitherto ſaid, is rather wiſdom than humility: now then I ſhall paſs on farther. Many neither will nor dare weigh and conſider the favours God has done

them in particular, for fear leſt they ſhould take occaſion from thence of vain glory and ſelf-complacency; in which indeed they deceive themſelves; for ſince the true means to attain to the love of God (as ſays the great angelical doctor) is the conſideration of his benefits; the more we know them, the more we ſhall love him: and as the benefits done to us in particular more powerfully move us than thoſe that are common, ſo ought they to be more attentively conſidered. Certainly nothing can ſo much humble us before the mercy of God, as the multitude of his benefits; nor ſo much humble us before his juſtice, as the multitude of our offences. Let us then conſider what he has done for us, and what we have done againſt him: and as we conſider our ſins one by one, ſo let us conſider his favours one by one. We muſt not fear, that the knowledge of what he has put in us, ſhould puff us up, ſo long as we are attentive to this truth, *that whatſoever there is of good in us, is not from ourſelves.* Alas! do mules ceaſe to be lumpiſh and ſtinking beaſts, for being laden with the precious and perfumed goods of the prince? *What haſt thou which thou haſt not received?* (ſays the apoſtle, 1 Cor. iv. 7.) *And if thou haſt received it, why doſt thou glory?* Nay, contrariwiſe, the lively conſideration of favours received, makes us humble, becauſe knowledge begets acknowledgment. But if in conſidering the favours God has done us, any kind of vanity ſhould tickle us, it will be an infallible remedy to recur to the conſideration of our ingratitudes, of our imperfections, and of our miſeries. If we conſider what we did, when God was not with us, we ſhall eaſily know, that what we do while he is with us, is not of our own doing, nor of our own growth; we ſhall enjoy it indeed, and rejoice at it, becauſe we have it, but we ſhall glorify God alone becauſe he is the author of it. Thus the bleſſed Virgin confeſſes that God had done great things for her, but it is only to take occaſion to humble herſelf, and to glorify God:

God: *My ſoul*, ſays ſhe, *doth magnify the Lord, becauſe he hath done great things for me.* Luke i. 46, 49.

We ſay many times that we are nothing, that we are miſery itſelf, and the filth of the world; but we ſhould be very ſorry any one ſhould take us at our word, and ſhould tell others that we are ſuch as we ſay we are. On the contrary, we make as if we would run away, and hide ourſelves, to the end that people ſhould run after us, and ſeek us out; we make ſhew as if we deſired to be the laſt, and to ſit down at the loweſt end of the table, but it is to the end that we may with more advantage paſs to the upper end. True humility never makes ſhew of herſelf, nor uſes many words of humility; for ſhe deſires not only to hide all other virtues, but alſo, and principally ſhe wiſhes to hide herſelf. And if it were lawful for her to lie, to diſſemble, or to ſcandalize her neighbour, ſhe would produce actions of arrogancy and haughtineſs, that under them ſhe might conceal herſelf, and lie altogether covered and unknown.

My advcie therefore is, *Philothea*, that we ſhou'd either not uſe any words of humility, or ſhould uſe them with a true interiour ſentiment comformable to what we pronounce outwardly. Let us never caſt down our eyes, but when we humble our hearts; let us not ſeem to deſire to be the loweſt, unleſs we truly deſire it from our heart. Now I hold this rule ſo general, that I bring no exception: only I add, that civility requires that we ſhould offer precedency ſometimes to thoſe who without doubt will refuſe it; and yet this is neither double-dealing, nor falſe humility: for in this caſe the only offer of precedency is a beginning of honour, and ſince we cannot give it them intirely, we do not ill to give them the beginning. I ſay the ſame of ſome words of honour or reſpect, which in rigour ſeem not to be true: yet are they true enough, if the heart of him that pronounces them have a true intention to honour and reſpect him for whom he ſays them; for altho' the

words ſignify with ſome exceſs that which we would ſay, yet we do not ill to uſe them, when common cuſtom requires it: however, I wiſh our words were always ſuited to our affections, as near as poſſible, that ſo we might follow in all and through all, a cordial ſincerity and candour. A man that is truly humble would rather another ſhould ſay of him that he is miſerable, that he is nothing, and that he is good for nothing, than to ſay it himſelf; at leaſt, if he knows that any man ſays ſo, he does not contradict it, but heartily agrees to it: for believing it firmly himſelf, he is glad to have others of the ſame opinion.

Many ſay, that they leave mental prayer for thoſe that are perfect, that for their part they are not worthy to uſe it. Others proteſt they dare not communicate often, becauſe they find not themſelves pure enough. Others, that they fear they ſhould diſgrace devotion if they ſhould mdedle with it, by reaſon of their great miſery and frailty. Others refuſe to employ their talent in the ſervice of God, and their neighbour, becauſe (ſay they) they know their own weakneſs, and that they fear they ſhould become proud, if they ſhould be inſtruments of any good, and that in giving light to others they ſhould conſume themſelves. All this is nothing but artifice, and a kind of humility not only falſe but malicious, by which tacitly and ſubtilly they ſeek to find fault with things of God; or at the beſt, to cover with the pretext of humility the love of their own opinion, their own humour, and their own ſlothfulneſs. *Aſk thee a ſign of the Lord thy God, either unto the depth of hell, or to the height above*, ſaid the prophet (Iſaias vii. 11.) to unhappy *Achaz*: And he anſwered; *I will not aſk, neither will I tempt the Lord.* O the wicked man! He would ſeem to bear great reverence to God, and under colour of humility excuſes himſelf from aſpiring to that grace which the divine goodneſs offers him: but ſees he not that when God deſires

ſires to give us his graces, it is pride to refuſe them; that the gifts of God oblige us to receive them; and that it is humility to obey him, and to follow, as near as we can, his deſires? Now God's deſire is, that we ſhould be perfect, uniting ourſelves to him, and following him, as near as we can. The proud man, who truſts in himſelf, has juſt occaſion not to dare to undertake any thing; but he that is humble is ſo much the more courageous, by how much the more he acknowledges his own inability; and the more wretched he eſteems himſelf, the more confident he becomes; becauſe his whole truſt is in God, who delights to ſhew forth his omnipotence in our weakneſs, and to elevate his mercy upon our miſery. We muſt then humbly and holily dare and undertake all that is judged proper for our advancement, by thoſe that conduct our ſouls.

To think we know what we know not, is directly folly; to deſire to paſs for knowing that which we are ſenſible we do not know, is an intolerable vanity. For my part, I would not make a ſhew of the knowledge even of that which I know; as, on the other hand, I would not make as if I were ignorant. When charity requires it, we muſt freely and ſweetly communicate to our neighbour, not only what is neceſſary for his inſtruction, but alſo what is profitable for his conſolation: for humility, which hides and conceals virtues, in order to preſerve them, diſcovers them nevertheleſs, when charity requires it, to enlarge, increaſe and perfect them. In which ſhe is like to that tree in the iſles of *Tylos*, which at night ſhuts and cloſes up her beautiful carnation flowers, and only opens them to the riſing Sun; ſo that the inhabitants of the country ſay that thoſe flowers ſleep by night: for ſo humility covers and hides all our virtuous and human perfections, and lets them never appear, but for the ſake of charity, which being a virtue not human, but heavenly, not moral, but divine,

is the true ſun of virtues, over which ſhe ought always to have dominion. So that the humilities which are prejudicial to charity, are undoubtedly falſe.

I would neither make as if I were a fool, nor make as if I were wiſe: for if humility forbids me to pretend to be wiſe, plain-dealing and ſincerity forbid me likewiſe to counterfeit the fool; and as vanity is contrary to humility, ſo artifice, affectation and diſſimulation, is contrary to plain-dealing and ſincerity. And if ſome great ſervants of God have made as if they were fools, to render themſelves more abject in the eyes of the world; we muſt admire them, but not imitate them: for they had motives that induced them to this exceſs, which were ſo peculiar to them and ſo extraordinary, that no man ought from thence to draw any conſequence for himſelf. And as for *David*, when he danced and leaped before the ark of the covenant, ſomewhat more than ordinary decency required, he did it not with a deſign to make the world believe he was a fool, but with all ſimplicity and without artifice he made uſe of thoſe exterior motions, which expreſſed the extraordinary and exceſſive joy he felt in his heart. True it is, that when *Michol* his wife reproached him for it, as an act of folly, he was not ſorry to ſee himſelf vilified; but continuing in a true and ſincere repreſentation of his joy, he teſtified that he was glad to receive ſome reproach for his God. And on this account I ſhall tell you, that if for acts of a true and ſincere devotion, the world ſhall eſteem you mean, abject or fooliſh, humility will make you rejoice at this happy reproach, the cauſe of which is not in you, but in thoſe that reproach you.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

That humility makes us love our own abjection.

I Paſs on further, and tell you, *Philothea*, that in all, and through all, you ſhould love your own abjection. But you will aſk me what it is to love your own abjection. In latin, *abjection* ſignifies *humility*, and *humility* ſignifies *abjection:* ſo that when our Lady in her ſacred canticle ſays, that all generations ſhould call her bleſſed, becauſe our Lord had regarded the humility of his handmaid; her meaning is, that our Lord had graciouſly looked down on her abjection, her meanneſs, and lowneſs, to heap upon her his graces and favours. Nevertheleſs there is a difference between the virtue of *humility* and our *abjection:* for our *abjection* is the lowneſs, meanneſs and baſeneſs, that is in us, without our thinking of it; whereas the virtue of *humility* is a true knowledge and a voluntary acknowledgment of our abjection. Now the great point of this humility conſiſts, in not only being willing to acknowledge our abjection, but in loving it, and delighting in it; and this not for want of courage and generoſity, but to exalt ſo much the more the divine Majeſty, and to eſteem our neighbour much more, in compariſon with ourſelves. This it is to which I exhort you: and that you may underſtand it the better, know that among the evils which we ſuffer, ſome are abject, and others are honourable; many can accommodate themſelves to ſuch as are honourable, but ſcarce any one to ſuch as are abject. You ſee a devout hermit all ragged and very cold, every one honours his tattered habit, with compaſſion on his ſufferings; but if a poor tradeſman or a poor gentleman or gentlewoman, be in the like caſe, people deſpiſe them and ſcoff at them; and thus you ſee how their poverty is abject. A religious man receives devoutly a ſharp reproof

from his ſuperior, or a child from his father; and every one ſhall call this, mortification, obedience and wiſdom; a gentleman or a lady ſhall ſuffer the like from another, and although it be for the love of God, men ſhall call it cowardice, and want of ſpirit. See then here again another evil that is abject. One has a canker in his arm, and another in his face: the firſt has only the diſeaſe, but the other with the diſeaſe has contempt, diſgrace and abjection. I ſay then, that we muſt not only love the evil, which is the buſineſs of the virtue of patience, but we muſt alſo embrace the abjection, which is done by the virtue of humility. Moreover, there are virtues which are abject, and virtues which are honourable. Patience, meekneſs, ſimplicity and humility itſelf are virtues, which worldlings hold for mean and abject: on the contrary, they much eſteem prudence, fortitude and liberality. There are alſo actions of one and the ſame virtue, of which ſome are deſpiſed and others are honoured: to give alms, and to forgive injuries, are both of them acts of charity; the firſt is honoured by every one, but the other is deſpiſed in the eyes of the world. A young gentleman or a young lady, who will not give themſelves over to the diſorders of a debauched company; to talk, to play, to dance, to drink, to dreſs, as they do, ſhall be ſcorned and cenſured by them, and their modeſty ſhall be termed bigotry or affectation: to love this, is to love our own abjection.

Behold an abjection of another kind. We go to viſit the ſick; if I am ſent to the moſt miſerable, that will be to me an abjection according to the world, for which reaſon I will love it. If I am ſent to a perſon of quality, it is an abjection according to the ſpirit, for there is not ſo much virtue nor merit in it, and therefore I will love this abjection. One falls in the midſt of the ſtreet, and beſides his fall, receives ſhame; we muſt love this abjection. There are

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even faults which have no other ill in them but only the abjection; and humility does not require that we ſhould commit them on ſet purpoſe, but it requires that we ſhould not vex ourſelves when we have committed them. Such are certain follies, incivllities, and inadvertencies, which as we ought to avoid before they are committed, for the ſake of civility and diſcretion; ſo when they are committed, we muſt be content with the abjection we meet with on theſe occaſions, and accept it willingly, for the ſake of following humility.

I ſay yet more: if I have diſordered myſelf through paſſion or diſſolution, and have ſpoken unbecoming words, with which God and my neighbour have been offended, I will repent myſelf heartily, be extremely ſorry for the offence, and will endeavour to make the beſt reparation I can for it; but yet I will admit of the abjection, and the contempt which it has brought upon me; and if the one could be ſeparated from the other, I would moſt earneſtly caſt away the ſin, and humbly retain the abjection.

But though we love the abjection which folows the evil, yet we muſt not neglect to redreſs the evil that cauſed it by, fit and lawful means, eſpecially when the evil is of conſequence: as, if I have ſome evil which is abject in my face, I will endeavour to have it cured, but not that I ſhould forget the abjection, which I received by it. If I have been guilty of ſome folly, which has offended no one, I will make no excuſe for it, becauſe, although it were a fault, yet it is not permanent: I could not then excuſe it, but only to rid myſelf of the abjection it brings me, and that would not be agreeable to humility. But, if through inadvertence or folly I have offended or ſcandalized any one, I will repair the offence by ſome true excuſe, becauſe the evil is permanent, and charity obliges me to remove it. Furthermore, it happens ſometimes, that charity requires of us to remove the abjection for

the good of our neighbour, to whom our reputation is neceſſary; but in that caſe though we remove the abjection from before our neighbour's eyes, to prevent his ſcandal, yet muſt we carefully ſhut it up and hide it in our heart for its edification.

But you would be willing to know, *Philothea*, which are the beſt abjections. I tell you plainly, that the moſt profitable to our ſouls, and moſt acceptable to God, are thoſe which come to us by accident, or by our condition of life, becauſe we have not choſen them, but have received them as they are ſent by God, whoſe choice is always better than our own. But if we were to chooſe any, the greateſt are the beſt; and thoſe are eſteemed the greateſt which are moſt contrary to our inclinations; provided that they be conformable to our vocation: for to ſpeak once for all, our own choice and election ſpoils or leſſens almoſt all our virtues. Oh! who will give us the grace to be able to ſay with that great King, (Pſalm lxxxiii. 11.) *I have choſen to be an abject in the houſe of God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of ſinners.* No one certainly can do it, dear *Philothea*, but he who, to exalt us, lived and died in ſuch manner as to be the reproach of men, and the abjection of the people. I have ſaid many things to you, which will ſeem hard, when you ſhall conſider them; but believe me, they will be ſweeter than ſugar or honey, when you ſhall put them in practice.

CHAP. VII.

How we are to preſerve our good name in the practice of humility.

PRAISE, honour and glory are not given to men, for every degree of virtue, but for an excellence in virtue; for by praiſe we ſeek to perſuade others to eſteem the excellency of thoſe whom we praiſe: by honour we teſtify, that we ourſelves eſteem them; and

and glory, in my opinion, is nothing elſe but a certain luſtre of reputation, which ariſes from the concurrence of many praiſes and honours. So that honours and praiſes are like precious ſtones, from a collection of which glory proceeds, like a certain enamelling. Now humility not being able to endure, that we ſhould have any opinion of our excelling, or to think that we ought to be preferred before others, conſequently cannot permit, that we ſhould hunt after praiſe, honour or glory, which are only due to excellency; but yet ſhe conſents to the counſel of the wiſe man, who admoniſhes us to have a care of our good name; Ecclus xli. 15. Becauſe a good name is an eſteem not of any excellency, but only of a bare and ordinary honeſty, and integrity of life, which humility hinders us not to acknowledge in ourſelves, nor, by conſequence, to deſire the reputation of it. It is true, that humility would deſpiſe a good name, if charity ſtood not in need of it: but becauſe it is one of the foundations of human ſociety, and that without it we are not only unprofitable, but prejudicial to the publick, by reaſon of the ſcandal it would receive; charity requires, and humility conſents that we ſhould deſire it, and carefully preſerve it.

Moreover as the leaves of the trees which in themſelves are of no great value, are nevertheleſs of good ſervice, not only to beautify the trees, but alſo to preſerve the fruit whilſt it is young and tender; ſo a good reputation, which of itſelf is a thing not much to be deſired, is notwithſtanding very profitable, not only for the ornament of our life, but alſo for the preſervation of our virtues, and eſpecially of virtues which as yet are but weak and tender.

The obligation of maintaining our reputation, and of being ſuch as we are eſteemed to be, preſſes forward a generous ſpirit with a ſtrong and agreeable impulſe. Let us then preſerve our virtues, dear *Philothea*, becauſe they are acceptable to God, the great

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and ſovereign object of all our actions. But as they, who deſire to preſerve fruits, are not content to candy them with ſugar, but put them alſo into veſſels that are proper to keep them: ſo, although the love of God is the principal preſerver of our virtues, yet may we further employ our good name, as very convenient and profitable to that purpoſe.

Yet we muſt not be over ardent, exact and nice with regard to this preſervation of our good name: for ſuch as are ſo tender and ſenſible in point of their reputation, are like thoſe that for every ſlight indiſpoſition take phyſick; for theſe thinking to preſerve their health, quite deſtroy it; and thoſe others endeavouring to maintain ſo delicately their reputation, entirely loſe it; for by this tenderneſs they become whimſical, quarrelſome and inſupportable, and thus provoke the malice of detractors.

The overlooking and deſpiſing of an injury or calumny is commonly ſpeaking a more wholeſome remedy by far than reſentment, contention and revenge: for the deſpiſing of them cauſes them to vaniſh; whereas if we are angry at them, we ſeem to own them. Crocodiles hurt none but thoſe that fear them; nor detraction, any but ſuch as vex themſelves with it. Exceſſive fear of loſing our eſteem, argues a great diſtruſt of its foundation, which is the truth of a good life. Towns that have wooden bridges over great rivers, fear their being carried away by every little flood; but they that have bridges of ſtone, only apprehend extraordinary inundations: ſo they that have a ſoul ſolidly grounded in chriſtian virtue, deſpiſe the overflowing of injurious tongues; but thoſe, that find themſelves weak, are diſquieted with every diſcourſe. Verily, *Philothea*, he that has a mind to have a reputation with all, loſes it with all; and that perſon deſerves to loſe honour, who ſeeks to receive it from thoſe whoſe vices make them truly infamous and diſhonourable.

Reputation is but as a ſign to ſhew where virtue is lodged; it is virtue then that muſt be preferred in all

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and through all: wherefore, if any call you hypocrite becauſe you give yourſelf to devotion, or eſteem you a perſon of no courage becauſe you have pardoned an injury, laugh at all that; for beſides that ſuch judgments are made by weak and fooliſh people, we muſt not forſake virtue, nor turn aſide out of the way of it, although we were to loſe our reputation, becauſe we muſt prefer the fruit before the leaves, that is to ſay, the interior and ſpiritual good before all external goods. It is lawful to be jealous, but not an idolater of one's reputation: and as we muſt not offend the eyes of the good, ſo we muſt not ſtrive to ſatisfy thoſe of the wicked. The beard is an ornament to the face of a man, and the hair to that of a woman: if one pull away by the root the beard from the chin, and the hair from the head, it will very hardly grow again, but if it be only cut, nay, though it be ſhaved, it will ſoon come again, and will grow ſtronger and thicker than before; ſo, although our reputation be cut, or even quite ſhaved by detracting tongues, (which, *David* ſays, are like ſharp razors) we muſt not make ourſelves uneaſy, for it will ſoon ſpring forth again, not only as fair as ever it was, but much more firm and durable. But if our vices, our unhappy ways, and wicked courſe of life take away our reputation, it will very hardly return, becauſe it is pulled up by the root: for the root of a good name is virtue and probity, which, as long as it remains in us, can always recover the honour due to it.

If any vain converſation, idle habit, fond love, or frequenting of improper company, blaſt our reputation, we muſt forſake theſe things; for our good name is of more value than any vain contentments. But, if for the exerciſe of piety, for our advancement in devotion, and making our way towards eternal good things, men grumble and murmur at us, or ſpeak evil of us, let us leave theſe curs to bark againſt the moon; for if they are at any time able to caſt an

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aſperſion on our good name, and by that means cut and ſhave the hair and beard of our reputation, they will quickly ſpring up again, and the razor of detraction will be as advantageous to our honour, as the pruning knife to the vine, which makes it abound and multiply in fruit.

Let us fix our eyes always on Jeſus Chriſt crucified, and march on in his ſervice with confidence and ſincerity, yet wiſely and diſcreetly: he will be the protector of our reputation; and if he ſuffers it to be taken from us, it will be either to reſtore it to us with advantage, or to make us profit in holy humility, of which one only ounce is better than a thouſand pounds of honours. If we are blamed unjuſtly, let us peaceably oppoſe the truth againſt the calumny; if the calumny continue, let us likewiſe continue to humble ourſelves, reſigning our reputation together with our ſouls into God's hands; we cannot ſecure it better. Let us ſerve God in evil report and good report (2 Cor. vi.) acording to St. *Paul*'s example, that we may ſay with *David*, (Pſ. xviii.) *For thy ſake, O Lord, I have borne reproach, and ſhame hath covered my face.* I except nevertheleſs certain crimes ſo horrid and infamous, that no man ought to ſuffer the falſe imputation of them, if he can juſtly acquit himſelf; and alſo certain perſons, on whoſe reputation depends the edification of many: for in theſe caſes we muſt quietly ſeek a reparation of the wrong received, according to the opinion of divines.

CHAP. VIII.

Of meekneſs towards our neighbours, and remedies againſt anger.

THE holy chriſm, which by apoſtolical tradition we uſe in the Church of God for confirmations and conſecrations, is compoſed of oil of olives mingled with balm; which amongſt other things, repreſents

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to us the two dear and well-beloved virtues which ſhone forth in the ſacred perſon of our Lord, and which he hath ſingularly recommended to us; as if by them our heart ought to be in a particular manner conſecrated to his ſervice, and dedicated to his imitation: *Learn of me*, ſays he, *for I am meek and humble of heart* (Matt xii. 29.) Humility perfects us with regard to God, and meekneſs with regard to our neighbour. The balm, which, as I have ſaid before, ever ſinks beneath all other liquors, repreſents humility; and the oil of olives, which ſwims always above, repreſents meekneſs and mildneſs, which ſurmounts all things, and excels amongſt virtues, as being the flower of charity, which, according to St. *Bernard*, is then in its perfection, when it is not only patient, but alſo meek and mild. But take care, *Philothea*, that this myſtical chriſm, compounded of meekneſs and humility, be within your heart; for it is one of the great artifices of the enemy to make many deceive themſelves with the expreſſions and exterior carriage and behaviour of theſe two virtues, who not examining thoroughly their interior affections, think themſelves to be humble and meek, whereas in effect they are nothing leſs: and this may be eaſily diſcovered, becauſe for all their ceremonious mildneſs and humility, at the leaſt croſs word, or the leaſt injury they receive, they raiſe themſelves up with an arrogancy not to be equalled. They ſay that thoſe who have taken the preſervative, which is commonly called *the grace of Saint Paul*, ſwell not at all when they are bit and ſtung by a viper, provided the preſervative be of the beſt; in like manner when humility and meekneſs are good and true, they preſerve us from the ſwelling and burning heat which injuries are wont to raiſe in our hearts. But if, being ſtung and bit by detractors and enemies, we fly out, ſwell, and are enraged, it is a ſign that our humility and meekneſs is not true and ſincere, but artifical and only apparent.

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That holy and illuſtrious patriarch *Joſeph*, ſending back his brethren from *Egypt* to his father's houſe, gave them this only advice: *Be not angry with one another by the way.* Gen. xlv. 29. I ſay the ſame to you, *Philothea*; this wretched life is but a journey to the happy life to come, let us not be angry then one with another in the way; let us march on with the troop of our brethren and companions meekly, peaceably and lovingly: yea I ſay to you abſolutely and without exception, be not angry at all, if it be poſſible, and admit no pretext whatſoever to open the gate of your heart to anger; for St. *James* tells us poſitively, and without reſervation, *The anger of man works not the juſtice of God.* St. James ii. 20. We muſt indeed reſiſt evil, and reſtrain the vices of thoſe that are under our charge, conſtantly and courageouſly, but yet mildly and peaceably. Nothing ſo ſoon appeaſes the elephant, when enraged, as the ſight of the little lamb; and nothing ſo eaſily breaks the force of a cannon-ſhot, as wool. We value not ſo much the correction which proceeds from paſſion, though it be accompanied with reaſon, as that which proceeds from reaſon alone; for the reaſonable ſoul, being naturally ſubject to reaſon, is never ſubject to paſſion, but by tyranny: and therefore when reaſon is accompanied with paſſion, ſhe makes herſelf odious, her juſt government being debaſed by the fellowſhip of tyranny. Princes do honour to their people, and comfort them very much when they viſit them with a peaceable train; but when they are at the head of armies, though it be for the common good, their viſits are always diſagreeable and hurtful: for although they cauſe military diſcipline to be rigorouſly obſerved among their ſoldiers, yet they can never do ſo much but that ſome diſorder will always happen, by which the countryman will be a ſufferer. Even ſo, as long as reaſon rules, and peaceably exerciſes chaſtiſements, corrections and reprehenſions, although ſeverely

verely and exactly, every one loves and approves it; but when ſhe brings along with her anger, paſſion, and rage (which St. *Auſtin* calls her ſoldiers) ſhe makes herſelf more feared than loved, and even her own heart is always diſordered and ſuffers by it. It is better, ſays the ſame St. *Auſtin*, writing to *Profuturus*, to deny entrance to juſt and equitable anger, than to admit it, be it ever ſo little; becauſe it being once admitted, it is hard to drive it out again; for it comes in but as a little twig, and in a moment it grows greater, and becomes a beam. And if it can but once gain the night of us, and that the ſun ſets on our anger, (which the apoſtle forbids) it turns into hatred, and there is ſcarce any means to get quite rid of it; for it nouriſhes itſelf with a thouſand falſe perſuaſions, ſince there was never any angry man that thought his anger to be unjuſt.

It is better then, to attempt to find the way to live without anger, than to pretend to make a moderate and diſcreet uſe of anger: and when by imperfection and frailty we find ourſelves ſurpriſed with it, it is better to drive it away ſpeedily, than to compound with it; for, if we give it ever ſo little leiſure, it will make itſelf miſtreſs of the place, like the ſerpent, who eaſily draws in his whole body where he can get in his head.

But you will ſay, how ſhall I drive it away? You muſt, my *Philothea*, at the firſt touch you feel of it, ſpeedily aſſemble your forces, not violently, nor tumultuouſly, but mildly, and yet ſeriouſly: for as we ſee in the audiences of diverſe ſenates, and courts of juſtice, the uſhers crying peace, make more noiſe than thoſe whom they would ſilence; ſo it happens, many times, that endeavouring with violence to reſtrain our anger, we ſtir up more trouble in our heart, than the wrath hath excited before, and the heart being thus troubled can no longer be maſter of itſelf. After this meek effort practiſe the advice which

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St. *Auſtin*, being now old, gave to the young biſhop *Auxilius*: Do, ſays he, that which a man ſhould do, if that befal you which a man of God ſpeaks of in the pſalm, *My eye is troubled with wrath*, Pſ. xxx. Have recourſe to God; crying out, *Have Mercy on me, O Lord*, that he may ſtretch forth his right-hand to repreſs your anger: I mean, we muſt invoke the aſſiſtance of God, when we find ourſelves ſtirred up to wrath, in imitation of the apoſtles, when they were toſſed with the wind and the ſtorm, upon the waters; for, he will command our paſſions to ceaſe, and a great calm ſhall follow. But the prayer which is made againſt preſent and preſſing anger muſt always be performed meekly and calmly, and not violently: which muſt be obſerved in all the remedies we uſe againſt this evil. Moreover, as ſoon as ever you perceive that you have been guilty of an act of wrath, repair the fault by an act of meekneſs, exerciſed readily towards the ſame perſon againſt whom you were angry. For, as it is a ſovereign remedy againſt a lie, to unſay it upon the ſpot, as ſoon as one perceives he has told it: ſo it is a good remedy againſt anger, to repair it inſtantly by a contrary act of meekneſs: for green wounds, they ſay, are moſt eaſily cured.

Again when you are in tranquility, and without any occaſion of anger, make a good proviſion of meekneſs and mildneſs, ſpeaking all your words, and doing all your actions little and great, in the mildeſt manner you can; calling to mind that the Spouſe in the Canticles has not only honey in her lips, and on her tongue, but alſo under her tongue, that is, in her breaſt; and has not only honey but alſo milk: ſo we muſt not only have our words ſweet towards our neighbour, but alſo our whole breaſt; that is to ſay, the whole interiour of our ſoul: neither muſt we have only this ſweetneſs of honey, which is aromatic and fragrant, that is to ſay, the ſweetneſs of civil converſation with ſtrangers, but alſo the ſweetneſs of milk amongſt thoſe of our family and our near neighbours:

bours: in which they greatly fail, who in the ſtreet ſeem to be angels, and in their houſes devils.

CHAP. IX.

Of meekneſs towards ourſelves.

ONE of the beſt exerciſes we can perform of meekneſs, is that of which the ſubject is in ourſelves; in never fretting at ourſelves, nor at our own imperfections: for tho' reaſon requires, that we ſhould be diſpleaſed and ſorry, when we commit any faults, yet we muſt ever reſtrain ourſelves from a bitter, gloomy, ſpiteful, and paſſionate diſpleaſure, in which many are greatly to blame, who having yielded to anger, are angry for having been angry, and vexed to ſee themſelves vexed, for by this means they keep their heart ſtill ſteeped in paſſion: and tho' it ſeem as if the ſecond anger deſtroyed the firſt, it ſerves nevertheleſs to open a paſſage for a new anger on the firſt occaſion that ſhall preſent itſelf. Beſides, theſe angers, frettings and vexations againſt ourſelves, tend to pride, and have no other ſource than ſelf-love, which troubles and diſquiets itſelf to ſee us imperfect. We muſt then have a diſpleaſure at our faults, but ſuch as may be peaceable, ſettled and firm: for as a judge puniſhes malefactors much better when he is guided in his ſentences by reaſon, and proceeds with the ſpirit of tranquility, than when he acts with violence and paſſion, becauſe judging in paſſion he puniſhes not the faults, according as they are, but according as he is himſelf: ſo we correct ourſelves much better by repentances that are calm and ſteady than by thoſe which are harſh, turbulent, and paſſionate; for repentances exerciſed with violence, proceed not according to the quality of our faults, but according to our inclinations. For example, he that affects chaſtity, will vex himſelf beyond all bounds at the leaſt fault he ſhall commit againſt that virtue,

and

and will but laugh at a groſs detraction he ſhall have been guilty of. On the other hand, he that hates detraction, ſhall torment himſelf for a ſlight murmuring, and ſhall make no account of a groſs fault committed againſt chaſtity: and ſo of others. Now all this ſprings from no other fountain, than that in the judgment of their conſcience theſe men are not guided by reaſon, but by paſſion.

Believe me, *Philothea*, as the reproofs of a father, given midly and affectionately, have far more power with the child to reclaim him, than paſſion and rage: ſo when our heart ſhall have done any fault, if we reprehend it with mild and calm remonſtrances, having more compaſſion for it, than paſſion againſt it, and ſweetly encouraging it to amendment, the repentance it ſhall conceive by this means, will ſink much deeper and penetrate it much better than a fretful, injurious and ſtormy repentance.

For myſelf, if for example, I had a great affection not to fall into the vice of vanity, and yet had fallen deep into it, I would not reprove my heart in this manner; *Art thou not wretched, and abominable, that after ſo many reſolutions thou haſt ſuffered thyſelf to be carried away by vanity? Die with ſhame, lift up no more thy eyes to heaven, blind, impudent as thou art, traitor and diſloyal to thy God.* But I would correct it rationally, and by way of compaſſion; *So my poor heart, behold we are fallen into the pit: we had ſo much reſolved to avoid. Well, let us get out again, and quit it for ever, let us call upon the mercy of God, and hope that it will aſſiſt us to be more conſtant for the time to come; and let us put ourſelves again into the way of humility. Courage, let us from this day forward be more upon our guard; God will help us, we ſhall do better.* And on this reprehenſion would I build a firm and conſtant reſolution never more to fall into that fault, uſing the proper means for that, and eſpecially the advice of my director.

However

However if any one ſhould find that his heart cannot be ſufficiently moved with this ſweet kind of correction, he may employ reproaches, and uſe a more ſharp and ſtrong reprehenſion, to excite it to a profound confuſion, provided that after he has thus ſharply rebuked and chaſtiſed his heart, he conclude with giving it ſome comfort, cloſing up all his grief and anger with a ſweet and holy confidence in God, in imitation of that great penitent, who ſeeing his ſoul afflicted, raiſed it up in this manner: Pſ. xlii. 5. *Why art thou ſad, O my ſoul, and why doſt thou diſquiet me? Hope in God, for I will ſtill give praiſe to him, who is the ſalvation of my countenance, and my God.*

Raiſe up then your heart again when it ſhall fall, but fairly and ſoftly humbling yourſelf before God, thro' the knowledge of your own miſery, but without being aſtoniſhed at your fall; for it is no wonder that weakneſs ſhould be weak, or miſery wretched: deteſt nevertheleſs with all your power the offence God has received from you, and with a great courage and confidence in his mercy, return to the way of virtue, which you had forſaken.

CHAP. X.

That we muſt treat of our affairs with diligence, but without eagerneſs or ſolicitude.

THE care and diligence we ought to have in our affairs, are things very different from ſolicitude, anxious concern and eagerneſs. The angels have a care for our ſalvation, and procure it with diligence, yet they are free from ſolicitude, concern and hurry: for care and diligence appertain to their charity; but ſolicitude, concern and hurry would be utterly inconſiſtent with their felicity; becauſe care and diligence may be accompanied with tranquility and peace of mind, but ſolicitude and concern can not, and much leſs eager hurry.

Be

Be careful then and diligent, *Philothea*, in all the affairs you have in charge; for God having intruſted them with you, he will have you take good care of them: but if it be poſſible, be not ſolicitous or anxious about them; that is to ſay, do not undertake them with unquietneſs, anxiouſneſs, and eagerneſs; hurry not yourſelf about them; for all kind of eagerneſs and hurry troubles the reaſon and the judgment, and even hinders us from doing the thing well, which we are ſo eager about.

When our Lord reprehends St. *Martha*, he ſays; *Martha, Martha, thou art ſolicitous, and are troubled about many things.* Do you obſerve, if ſhe had been merely diligent, ſhe had not been troubled; but becauſe ſhe was under concern and diſquiet, ſhe hurries and troubles herſelf, and for this our Lord reprehends her. Rivers, which flow gently through the plains, bear great boats and rich merchandize; and the rain, which falls gently in the open fields, makes them fruitful in graſs and corn; but torrents and rivers, which run rapidly, and overflow the grounds, ruin the bordering country, and are unprofitable for traffick; and in like manner, vehement and tempeſtuous rains ſpoil the fields and the meadows. Never was work well done which was done with too much eagerneſs and hurry. We muſt haſten leiſurely, ſays the old proverb. He that is in haſte, ſays *Solomon*, Prov. xix. 2. is in danger of ſtumbling. We do our buſineſs ſoon enough when we do it well. Drones make much more noiſe, and are much more eager than bees; but they make only wax, and no honey: ſo they that hurry themſelves with a tormenting anxiety, and eager ſolicitude, never do much, nor well.

Flies do not trouble us by their ſtrength, but by their multitude: ſo great affairs give us not ſo much trouble as little ones do when they are in great number. Receive then with peace the buſineſs that ſhall come to you, and endeavour to diſpatch them in order

der one after another; for if you have a mind to do them all at once, or in diſorder, you will make efforts that will overcharge and weaken your ſpirit, and probably will lie down under the burthen, without effecting any thing.

In all your affairs, rely wholly on the divine Providence, by which alone all your deſigns muſt have ſucceſs: labour nevertheleſs quietly on your part to co-operate with it, and then believe, that if you truſt as you ought in God, the ſucceſs, which ſhall come to you, ſhall be always that which is the moſt profitable for you, whether it ſeem to you good or bad, according to your private judgment. Do as little children do, who with one hand hold faſt by their father, and with the other gather ſtraw-berries or black-berries along the hedges: ſo you, gathering and handling the goods of this world with one hand, muſt with the other hand always hold faſt the hand of your heavenly Father, turning yourſelf towards him from time to time, to ſee if your doings or occupations be pleaſing to him. And take heed above all things that you never let go his hand and his protection, thinking to gather or get more; for if he forſake you, you will not be able to go a ſtep without falling to the ground. My meaning is, *Philothea*, that amidſt your affairs and ordinary occupations, which require not ſo ſtrong and ſo earneſt an attention, you ſhould look more on God than on your affairs; and when your affairs are of ſo great importance, that, to be well done, they require your whole attention, that then alſo from time to time you ſhould look towards God, as they do that ſail on the ſea, who to go to the land which they deſire, look more up to heaven than down on the ſea on which they ſail: thus will God work with you, in you, and for you, and your labour ſhall be followed with conſolation.

CHAP. XI.

Of Obedience.

CHARITY alone can place us is perfection, but obedience, chaſtity, and poverty, are the three great means to attain to it. Obedience conſecrates our heart, chaſtity our body, and poverty our means, to the love and ſervice of God. Theſe are the three branches of the ſpiritual croſs, but all the three are grounded on the fourth, which is humility. I ſhall ſay nothing of theſe three virtues, as they are ſolemnly vowed, becauſe this only concerns the religious; nor even as they are ſimply vowed: for though a vow gives always many graces and merit to all virtues, yet to make us perfect it is not neceſſary they ſhould be vowed, provided they be obſerved. For though being vowed, and eſpecially ſolemnly, they place a man in the ſtate of perfection; yet to come to perfection itſelf, it ſuffices that they be obſerved: there being a great difference betwixt the ſtate of perfection, and perfection itſelf; ſince all biſhops and religious are in the ſtate of perfection, yet are they not all in perfection, as is but too plainly ſeen. Let us endeavour then, *Philothea*, to practiſe well theſe three virtues, every one according to his vocation; for though they place us not in the ſtate of perfection, yet they will give us perfection itſelf: and indeed we are obliged to the practice of theſe three virtues, though not all after the ſame manner.

There are two ſorts of obedience, the one neceſſary, the other voluntary. By the neceſſary, you muſt humbly obey your eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors, as the pope, the biſhop, the pariſh prieſt, and ſuch as are commiſſioned by them: you muſt alſo obey your politic ſuperiors in the ſtate, that is to ſay, your prince, and the magiſtrates which he has eſtabliſhed over your country: and finally, you muſt obey your domeſtical ſuperiors, that is to ſay, your father and mother, maſter and miſtreſs. Now this obedience is

called

called neceſſary, becauſe no man can exempt himſelf from the duty of obeying his ſuperiors, God having placed them in authority to command and govern, each one according to the charge he has over us. Obey then their commands, and this is of neceſſity. But to be perfect, follow their counſels alſo, and even their deſires and inclinations, ſo far as charity and diſcretion will permit you. Obey them when they ſhall ordain that which is agreeable to you, as to eat, or to take your recreation; for though it ſeem no great virtue to obey in theſe caſes, yet would it be a great vice to diſobey. Obey them in things indifferent, as to wear this or that dreſs, to go by one way or another, to ſing or to be ſilent; and this will be a very commendable obedience. Obey them in hard, troubleſome and diſagreeable things; and this will be a perfect obedience. Obey, in fine, meekly without reply, readily without delay, chearfully without repining; and above all, obey lovingly, for the love of him, who for the love of us, made himſelf obedient unto death, even to the death of the croſs, and who (as *S. Bernard* ſays) did rather chuſe to part with his life than his obedience.

That you may learn eaſily to obey your ſuperiors, condeſcend eaſily to the will of your equals, yielding to their opinions in what is not evil, without being contentious or obſtinate. Accommodate yourſelf willingly to the deſires of your inferiors, as far as reaſon will permit; never exerciſe an imperious authority over them, ſo long as they are good. It is an illuſion to believe, that we ſhould obey with eaſe, if we were religious, when we find ourſelves backward and ſtubborn in what regards obedience to ſuch as God hath placed over us.

We call that obedience voluntary, to which we oblige ourſelves by our own choice, and which is not laid upon us by another. We chooſe not commonly our prince, our biſhop, our father or mother, nor

even many times do wives chooſe their huſbands; but we chooſe our confeſſor and director: if then in chooſing we make a vow to obey (as the holy mother *Tereſa* did, who, as we have ſaid, beſides her obedience, ſolemnly vowed to the ſuperior of her order, bound herſelf by a ſimple vow, to obey father *Gratian*) or if without a vow we dedicate ourſelves to the obedience of any one, this obedience is always called voluntary, becauſe of its ground, which depends on our own will and choice.

We muſt obey all our ſuperiors, but every one according to the charge he has over us; as, in political and publick affairs, we muſt obey our prince; in eccleſiaſtical matters, our prelates; in domeſtical, our father, our maſter and our huſband; and in what regards the private conduct of the ſoul, our ghoſtly father, or director.

Deſire your ghoſtly father to order you all the actions of piety you are to perform, for ſo they will be better, and will have a double value and goodneſs; the one of themſelves, becauſe they are works of piety; the other of obedience, which hath commanded them, and in virtue of which they are performed. Happy are the obedient, for God will never ſuffer them to go aſtray.

CHAP. XII.

Of the neceſſity of chaſtity.

CHASTITY is the lilly of virtues, it makes men almoſt equal to angels. Nothing is beautiful but by its purity, and the purity of men is chaſtity. Chaſtity is called *honeſty*, and the poſſeſſion of it is *honour*; it is named *integrity*, and its contray is called *corruption*. In ſhort, it has its peculiar glory, to be the fair and unſpotted virtue of ſoul and body.

It is never lawful to draw an impure pleaſure from our bodies in any manner whatſoever, but only in lawful

lawful marriage, the ſanctity of which may by a juſt compenſation repair the damage we receive in that delectation. And yet even in marriage the honeſty of the intention muſt be obſerved, to the end that if there be any indecency in the pleaſure that is taken, there may be nothing but honeſty in the will that takes it.

The chaſte heart is like the mother-pearl, which can receive no drop of water but ſuch as comes from heaven: for it can accept of no pleaſure but that of marriage, which is ordained from heaven: out of that, it is not allowed to it ſo much as to think of it, ſo as to take a voluntary and deliberate delight in the thought.

For the firſt degree of this virtue, *Philothea*, beware of admitting any kind of pleaſure that is prohibited and forbidden, as all thoſe are which are taken out of marriage, or even in marriage, when they are taken contrary to the rule of marriage. For the ſecond, refrain, as much as is poſſible, from all unprofitable and ſuperfluous delights, although lawful and permitted. For the third, ſet not your affection on pleaſures and delights which are ordained and commanded; for though we muſt take thoſe delectations that are neceſſary, I mean thoſe which concern the end and inſtitution of holy matrimony, yet we muſt never ſet our heart and mind upon them.

As to the reſt, all people have great need of this virtue. They that are in the ſtate of widowhood ought to have a courageous chaſtity, to deſpiſe not only preſent or future objects, but to reſiſt alſo the impure imaginations which former pleaſures lawfully received in marriage may produce in their minds, which from thence are more ſuſceptible of unclean allurements. For this cauſe St. *Auſtin* admires the purity of his friend *Alipius*, who had wholly forgotten and deſpiſed the pleaſures of the fleſh, of which nevertheleſs he had ſome experience in his youth.

And in effect, while the fruits are intire and ſound, they may be preſerved, ſome in ſtraw, ſome in ſand, and ſome in their own leaves; but being once cut or hurt, it is almoſt impoſſible to preſerve them, but by honey and ſugar in the way of ſweet-meats: ſo chaſtity, which has not been hurt or tainted, may many ways be kept; but after it has once been violated, nothing can preſerve it but an excellent devotion, which (as I have often repeated) is the true honey and ſugar of the ſpirit.

Virgins have need of a chaſtity extremely ſincere, nice and tender, to baniſh from their hearts all ſorts of curious thoughts, and to deſpiſe with an abſolute contempt all ſorts of unclean pleaſures; which in truth deſerve not to be deſired by men, ſince they are better enjoyed by *aſſes* and *ſwine*. Let then theſe pure ſouls take heed never to make the leaſt doubt but that chaſtity is incomparably better than all that which is incompatible with it; for as the great St. *Jerome* ſays, the enemy violently tempts virgins to deſire to make a trial of theſe pleaſures, repreſenting them as infinitely more agreeable and delightful than indeed they are, which often troubles them very much, whilſt, as this holy father ſays, they eſteem that more ſweet, which they know nothing of.

For as the little butterfly, ſeeing the flame, hovers curiouſly about it, to try whether it be as ſweet as it is fair, and being carried away with this fancy, ceaſes not till it is deſtroyed at the very firſt trial: ſo young people ſuffer themſelves oftentimes to be ſo poſſeſſed with the falſe and fooliſh opinion they have of the pleaſure of voluptuous flames, that after many curious thoughts, in fine, they ruin and loſe themſelves, and periſh in them; more fooliſh in this than the butterflies, for theſe have ſome cauſe to imagine that the fire is ſweet, becauſe it is ſo beautiful; but thoſe others knowing that which they ſeek to be extremely diſhoneſt, ceaſe not for all that to ſet a value on that fooliſh and bruitiſh pleaſure.

But

But as for thoſe who are married, it is moſt true (though the vulgar cannot conceive it) that chaſtity is very neceſſary alſo for them: becauſe in reſpect of them it conſiſts not in abſtaining abſolutely from carnal pleaſures, but in containing themſelves in the midſt of pleaſures. Now as this commandment, *Be angry, and ſin not*, is, in my opinion, harder than this, *Be not angry*, and as one may eaſier keep from anger, than regulate it; ſo it is eaſier to keep ourſelves altogether from fleſhly pleaſures, than to keep a moderation in them. True it is, that the holy liberty of marriage hath a particular force to extinguiſh the fire of concupiſcence; but the frailty of them that enjoy this liberty paſſes eaſily from permiſſion to diſſolution, and from uſe to abuſe: and as we ſee many rich men ſteal, not through want, but for covetouſneſs; ſo likewiſe we ſee many married people exceed by mere intemperance and incontinency, notwithſtanding the lawful object to which they ought and might confine themſelves; their concupiſcence being like wild-fire, which runs burning here and there, without reſting in any one place. It is always dangerous to take violent medicines; for if we take more than we ſhould, or if they be not well prepared, much damage is received by them. Marriage was bleſſed and ordained in part for a remedy of concupiſcence, and no doubt it is a very good remedy; but yet violent, and conſequently very dangerous, if it be not diſcreetly uſed.

I add, that the variety of human affairs, beſides long diſeaſes, many times ſeparates huſbands from their wives; and therefore married people have need of two kinds of chaſtity; the one for abſolute abſtinence, when they are ſeparated upon the occaſions I have been ſpeaking of; the other for moderation, when they are together in the ordinary courſe. St. *Catherine* of *Sienna* ſaw, amongſt the damned, many ſouls grievouſly tormented for having violated the ſanctity of marriage, which happened, ſaid ſhe, not for

the enormity of the ſin, for murders and blaſphemies are more enormous; but becauſe they that commit it make no conſcience of it, and therefore continue long in it.

You ſee then that chaſtity is neceſſary for all ſorts of people; *Follow peace with all men* (ſays the Apoſtle) *and holineſs, without which no one ſhall ſee God:* where by holineſs is underſtood *chaſtity*, as S. *Jerom* and S. *Chryſoſtom* obſerve. No, *Philothea*, no one ſhall ſee God without chaſtity; no one ſhall dwell in his holy tabernacle, that is not clean of heart: and, as our Saviour himſelf ſays, Apoc. xxii. 15. dogs and the unchaſte ſhall be baniſhed thence; and *bleſſed are the clean of heart, for they ſhall ſee God.* S. Matt. v. 8.

CHAP. XIII.

Advices how to preſerve chaſtity.

BE exceeding diligent in turning yourſelf away from all the approaches and all the allurements of incontinency; for this evil works inſenſibly, and by little beginnings advances to great accidents, which are always more eaſy to ſhun than to cure.

Human bodies are like glaſſes, which cannot be carried together touching one another, without running the riſk of their being broke; and like fruits, which though ever ſo ſound and ſeaſonable, yet by touching one another are impaired. Water itſelf in a veſſel, be it ever ſo freſh, being once touched by any beaſt of the earth cannot long retain its freſhneſs. Never ſuffer any one, *Philothea*, to touch you uncivilly, either in the way of play, or in the way of love: for though perhaps chaſtity may be preſerved in thoſe actions rather light than lewd, yet the freſhneſs and flower of chaſtity always receives ſome detriment and loſs: but to ſuffer yourſelf to be touched immodeſtly, is the utter ruin of chaſtity.

Chaſtity

Chaſtity depends on the heart as on her ſource, yet regards the body as her ſubject; and therefore ſhe may be loſt by all the exterior ſenſes of the body, and by the thoughts and deſires of the heart. It is impurity to behold, to hear, to ſpeak, to ſmell, to touch any thing that is immodeſt, when the heart entertains itſelf, and takes pleaſure in it. St. *Paul* ſays poſitively: *Let not fornication be ſo much as once named amongſt you.*

The bees not only will not touch carrion, but ſhun and hate extremely all ſorts of ſtench, which proceed from it. The ſacred Spouſe in the Canticles has her hands diſtilling myrrh, which is the antidote againſt corruption; her lips are bound up with a ſcarlet ribbon, the mark of her modeſty in her words; ſhe has the eyes of doves, by reaſon of their cleanneſs; her ears have gold ear-rings, in token of their purity; her noſe is amongſt the cedars of *Libanus*, which are incorruptible wood: ſuch ought to be the devout ſoul; chaſte, clean, and pure, in hands, lips, ears, eyes, and in all her body.

To this purpoſe, I will tell you of a ſaying, which the ancient father *John Caſſian* relates, as coming from the mouth of the great St. *Baſil*, who, ſpeaking of himſelf, ſaid one day; *I know not what belongs to women, yet I am not a virgin.* Certainly chaſtity may be loſt as many ways as there are kinds of immodeſty and wantonneſs, which according as they are great or little, ſome weaken it, others wound it, and others kill it outright. There are certain indiſcreet, and ſenſual familiarities and paſſions, which, to ſpeak properly, do not deſtroy chaſtity, and yet they weaken it, leave it languiſhing, and ſtain its beautiful whiteneſs. There are other familiarities and paſſions not only indiſcreet, but vicious; not only fond, but diſhoneſt; not only ſenſual, but carnal; and by theſe chaſtity is at leaſt grievouſly wounded. I ſay at leaſt; becauſe it dies by them, and periſhes altogether, when theſe fooleries and

wanton dalliances cauſe in the fleſh the utmoſt effect of impure delight: for then chaſtity periſhes in a more unworthy, more wicked, more wretched manner than when it is loſt by fornication, or even by adultery and inceſt; ſince theſe latter kinds of filthineſs are but ſins, but the former, as *Tertullian* ſays in his book of Chaſtity, are monſters of iniquity and of ſin. Now neither *Caſſian* believes, nor do I believe that St. *Baſil* ſpake of any ſuch diſorder, when he accuſed himſelf of not being a virgin, but I am of opinion that he only ſaid this with relation to pleaſure in evil thoughts, which though they had not defiled his body, yet had they contaminated his heart, of the purity of which generous ſouls are exceeding jealous.

Frequent not the company of immodeſt perſons, principally if they be alſo impudent, as for the moſt part they are: for as the he-goats, touching the ſweet almond trees with their tongues, make them become bitter; ſo theſe corrupted ſouls and infected hearts ſcarce ſpeak to any either of the ſame or of a different ſex, but they cauſe them in ſome degree to fall from purity: they have poiſon in their eyes and in their breath, like baſiliſks. On the contrary, keep company with thoſe that are chaſte and virtuous; often meditate and read holy things; for the word of God is chaſte, and makes them chaſte that delight in it; which made *David* compare it to the topaz, a precious ſtone, which has the property to aſſuage the heat of concupiſcence.

Keep yourſelf always near to Jeſus Chriſt crucified, both ſpiritually by meditation, and really by the holy communion. For as they who lie on the herb called *agnus caſtus* become chaſte and modeſt; ſo you, laying down your heart to reſt upon our Lord, who is the true chaſte and immaculate lamb, ſhall ſee that your ſoul and your heart ſhall ſoon be cleanſed from all the defilements of impurity.

CHAP.

CHAP XIV.

Of poverty of ſpirit to be obſerved in the midſt of riches.

BLESSED are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: Mat. v. 3. Curſed then are the rich in ſpirit, for the miſery of hell is for them. He is rich in ſpirit, who has riches in his ſpirit, or his ſpirit in riches; he is poor in ſpirit, who has no riches in his ſpirit, nor his ſpirit in riches. The halcyons make their neſt like an apple, and leave only one little opening in them at the top; they build them on the ſea-ſhore, and make them ſo firm and impenetrable, that the waves ſurprizing them, the water can never get into them; but keeping always above, they remain in the midſt of the ſea, upon the ſea, and maſters of the ſea. Your heart, dear *Philothea*, ought to be in this manner, open only to heaven, and impenetrable to riches and all tranſitory things: if you have any of them, keep your heart free from affection to them, let it be always above them; and amidſt riches let it be without riches, and maſter of riches. No; lodge not this heavenly ſpirit within theſe earthly goods, let it be always above them, never in them.

There is a great difference betwixt having poiſon, and being poiſoned. Apothecaries have almoſt all of them poiſons to uſe on diverſe occaſions; but yet they are not poiſoned, becauſe they have not poiſon in their bodies, but only in their ſhops: ſo you may have riches, without being poiſoned with them, if you keep them in your houſe, or in your purſe, and not in your heart. To be rich in effect, and poor in affection, is the great happineſs of a chriſtian; for he has, by this means, the conveniency of riches for this world, and the merit of poverty for the world to come.

Alas! *Philothea*, never any man will own himſelf, to be covetous; every one diſavows that baſeneſs and meanneſs of heart: they excuſe themſelves on the charge of children which oppreſſes them; on that wiſdom, which requires that men ſhould eſtabliſh themſelves in means; they never have too much; ſome neceſſities are always found out to get more; nay, the moſt covetous not only will not confeſs themſelves to be ſuch, but they even think in their conſcience, they are not ſo. No; for covetouſneſs is a monſtrous fever, which makes itſelf ſo much the more inſenſible, by how the more violent and ardent it is. *Moſes* ſaw the ſacred fire, which burnt the buſh, and yet conſumed it not at all; but this profane fire of avarice on the contrary conſumes and devours the covetous perſon, and yet burns him not at all; at leaſt, in the midſt of his moſt exceſſive heats and burnings, he boaſts of the moſt agreeable coolneſs in the world, and eſteems his inſatiable drought to be a natural and pleaſing thirſt.

If you have a longing, ardent and reſtleſs deſire for the goods which you have not, though you may ſay, you would not have them unjuſtly; yet for all that you are truly covetous. He that has a longing, ardent and reſtleſs deſire to drink, although he would drink nothing but water, yet it is a ſign he has a fever.

O *Philothea*, I know not whether it be a juſt deſire to covet to have juſtly that which another juſtly poſſeſſes; for it ſeems that by this deſire we would ſerve our own convenience by the inconvenience of another. If a man juſtly poſſeſſes any thing, has he not more reaſon to keep it juſtly, than we to deſire to have it juſtly? and why then do we extend our deſire to his convenience, to deprive him of it? At the beſt, if this deſire be juſt, yet certainly it is not charitable; for we would not in any caſe that another man ſhould deſire, although juſtly, that which we have a deſire to keep juſtly. This was the ſin of *Achab*, who deſired to have *Naboth*'s vineyard juſtly, which *Naboth* much more juſtly deſired to keep: *Achab* deſired it

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with an ardent longing and impatient desire, and therefore offended God.

'Tis time enough, dear *Philothea*, to desire your neighbour's goods, when he shall begin to desire to part with them; for then his desire will make yours not only just, but charitable also; yes, for I am willing you should take care to augment your means and substance, so it may be done not only justly, but peaceably and charitably.

If you have a strong affection to the goods which you possess, if you be much concerned about them, setting your heart on them, having them always in your thoughts, and fearing the loss of them with a sensible and pressing apprehension, believe me, you have still some kind of fever; for they that have a fever drink the water that is given them, with a certain eagerness, and with a kind of attention and satisfaction, which the healthy are not accustomed to have. It is not possible to take much pleasure in a thing, without setting one's affection much upon it.

If you suffer loss of goods, and find your heart quite disconsolate and greatly afflicted with it, believe me, *Philothea*, you have very much affection to them; for nothing so much evidences the affection to what we have lost, as the affliction for the loss.

Desire not then with a full and express desire the wealth you have not, nor set your heart much on what you have: give not yourself up to grief for the losses which shall befall you, and then you shall have some reason to believe, that being rich in effect, you are not so in affection, but that you are poor in spirit, and consequently blessed, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to you.

CHAP. XV.

How to practise true and real poverty, being notwithstanding really rich.

THE painter *Parrhasius* painted the people of *Athens* by a very ingenious invention, representing

ing them with diverſe and variable diſpoſitions, cholerick, unjuſt, inconſtant, courteous, clement, merciful, haughty, vain-glorious, humble, hardy, and cowardly; and all this together. But I, dear *Philothea*, would put into your heart riches and poverty both together, a great care and a great contempt of temporal things.

Take much more care to make your goods profitable and fruitful, than wordly men do. Tell me, are not the gardeners of great princes more curious and diligent to cultivate and embelliſh the gardens they have in charge, than if they were their own? and why? becauſe doubtleſs they conſider thoſe as the gardens of kings and princes, to whom they deſire to make themſelves acceptable by thoſe ſervices. *Philothea*, the poſſeſſions we have, are not ours; God has given them to us to cultivate, and 'tis his will that we ſhould render them fruitful and profitable, and therefore we do him an agreeable ſervice in taking care of them: but then it muſt be a care, greater and more ſolid than that which worldlings have of their goods; for their labours are but for love of themſelves, and ours muſt be for the love of God. Now as ſelf-love is a violent, turbulent, and eager love; ſo the care that is taken for it, is full of trouble, and uneaſineſs and diſquiet: and as the love of God is ſweet, peaceable, and calm; ſo the care which proceeds from it, although it be for worldly goods, is amiable, ſweet and agreeable. Let us then have this peaceful care of preſerving, yea and of increaſing our temporal goods, when juſt occaſion ſhall preſent itſelf, and as far as our condition requires it: for God will have us to do ſo for the love of him.

But take heed that ſelf-love deceive you not; for ſometimes it counterfeits ſo well the love of God, that one would ſay it was the ſame. Now that it may not deceive you, and that the care of your temporal goods may not turn into covetouſneſs, beſides what I ſaid in the former chapter, we muſt very often

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practiſe a real and effectual poverty, in the midſt of all the means and riches that God has given us.

Deprive yourſelf then often of ſome part of your means, by beſtowing them on the poor with a willing heart; for to give away what one has, is to impoveriſh one's ſelf by ſo much as one gives, and the more one gives the poorer one makes one's ſelf. 'Tis true God will repay it you again, not only in the next world, but even in this; for nothing makes us ſo much proſper in this world as alms: but till ſuch time as God ſhall reſtore you, you will remain ſo much the poorer by what you have given. O how holy and how rich is that poverty, which comes by giving alms!

Love the poor and poverty, for by this love you ſhall become truly poor, ſince, as the ſcripture ſays, *we are made like the things which we love.* Love makes the lovers equals: *who is weak* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *with whom I am not weak?* He might have ſaid likewiſe, who is poor, with whom I am not poor? For love made him like to thoſe whom he loved: if then you love the poor, you ſhall be truly partaker of their poverty, and poor like them. Now if you love the poor, be often among them, be glad to ſee them in your houſe, and to viſit them in theirs, converſe willingly with them, be pleaſed to have them near you in the church, in the ſtreets, and elſewhere. Be poor in tongue with them, ſpeaking to them as their companion; but be rich in hand, imparting to them of your goods, as having more abundance.

Will you yet go farther, my *Philothea*, content not yourſelf to be as poor as the poor, but be poorer than the poor themſelves. And how may that be? The ſervant is lower than his maſter; make yourſelf then a ſervant of the poor, go and ſerve them in their beds when they are ſick; I ſay, ſerve them with your own hands, be their cook yourſelf, and at your own expence: be their ſempſtreſs and laundreſs. O my *Philothea*, this ſervice is more glorious than a kingdom.

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I cannot ſufficiently admire the ardour, with which this counſel was put in practice by St. *Lewis*, one of the greateſt kings the ſun ever ſaw, I ſay a great king in every kind of greatneſs. He ſerved often at table the poor whom he maintained, and cauſed three poor men almoſt every day to come to his table, and many times he eat the remainder of their pottage with an imcomparable love. When he viſited the hoſpitals of the ſick (which he did very often) he commonly ſet himſelf to ſerve thoſe who had the moſt loathſome diſeaſes, as the leprous, ulcerous, and ſuch like; and performed all this ſervice to them bareheaded, and kneeling on the ground, reſpecting in their perſons the Saviour of the world, and cheriſhing them with as tender a love as any fond mother could do her own child. St. *Elizabeth*, daughter to the king of *Hungary*, often put herſelf amongſt the poor, and for her recreation ſometimes cloathed herſelf like a poor woman amongſt her ladies, ſaying to them, If I were poor, I would dreſs in this manner. O good God, *Philothea*, how poor were this prince and princeſs in the midſt of their riches, and how rich were they in their poverty! Bleſſed are they that are poor in this manner, for to them belongs the kingdom of heaven. *I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was naked, and you cloathed me; come, poſſeſs the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*, will the King of the poor, and of kings, ſay at his great judgment.

There is no one but upon ſome occaſion or other finds a want of ſome conveniency: ſometimes there comes a gueſt to our houſe whom we ſhould and would entertain very well, but for the preſent we have not the proper means; ſometimes our beſt cloaths are in one place, when we want them in another where we muſt be ſeen; it happens another time that all the wines in our cellar work and turn, ſo that there remain only ſuch as are bad, or green; another time we

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happen to be in ſome poor village, where all things are wanting, where we have neither bed, nor chamber, nor table, nor attendance: in fine, it is very eaſy to be often in want of ſomething, be we ever ſo rich. Now this is to be poor in effect, with regard to the things we want. *Philothea*, be glad of theſe occaſions, accept them with a good heart, and ſuffer them chearfully.

When you ſhall meet with loſſes which ſhall impoveriſh you, either much or little, as in the caſe of tempeſts, fires, inundations, dearths, robberies, or law-ſuits; O then is the proper ſeaſon to practiſe poverty, receiving theſe loſſes with meekneſs, and ſubmitting with patience and conſtancy to this impoveriſhment. *Eſau* preſented himſelf to his father with his hands all covered with hair, and *Jacob* did the ſame; but becauſe the hair that was on *Jacob*'s hands ſtuck not to his ſkin, but to his gloves, one might take away the hair without hurting his ſkin: on the other ſide, becauſe the hair on the hands of *Eſau* ſtuck to his ſkin, which was all hairy by nature, he that would have offered to pluck off his hair, would have put him to great pain; ſo that he would have cried aloud, and been very warm in his own defence. Thus when our worldly goods cleave to our hearts, if a tempeſt, if a thief, if a wrangler pluck away any part of them from us, what complaints, what troubles, what impatiences do we fall into? But when our goods are only conſidered according to the care God would have us take of them, and do not cleave to our heart, if they be taken from us, we loſe neither our ſenſes nor our peace. This is the difference betwixt beaſts and men as to their garments; for the garments of beaſts ſtick faſt to their fleſh, and thoſe of men are only put upon them, ſo that they may be put on and off at their pleaſure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

How to practiſe richneſs of ſpirit in real poverty.

BUT if you are really poor, dear *Philothea*, for God's ſake be likewiſe poor in ſpirit: make a virtue of neceſſity, and value this precious jewel of poverty at the high rate it deſerves: its luſtre is not diſcovered in this world, and yet nevertheleſs it is exceeding beautiful and rich.

Be patient, you are in good company: our Lord himſelf, our Lady, the Apoſtles, ſo many Saints both men and women have been poor, and even when they might have been rich they have refuſed to be ſo. How many great ones, according to the world, have there been, who in ſpite of many contradictions have gone to ſeek with great diligence after holy poverty in cloiſters and hoſpitals? They took true pains to find her. Witneſs S. *Alexius*, S. *Paula*, S. *Paulinus*, S. *Angela*, and ſo many others; and behold, *Philothea*, this holy poverty, more gracious in your regard, comes to preſent herſelf to you in your own lodging; you have met her without ſeeking her, and without pain; embrace her then as the dear friend of Jeſus Chriſt, who was born and who lived and who died in poverty; ſhe was his nurſe all his life-time.

Your poverty, *Philothea*, has two great privileges, by means of which ſhe can make you merit very much. The firſt is, that ſhe came not to you by your own choice, but by the only will of God, who has made you poor, without any concurrence of your own will. Now that which we receive purely from the will of God, is always very agreeable to him, provided that we receive it with a good heart, and for the love of his holy will; where there is leaſt of our own, there is moſt of God; the ſimple and pure acceptance of God's will makes our ſuffering extremely pure.

The ſecond privilege of this poverty is, that it is a poverty truly poor. That poverty which is praiſed, careſſed, eſteemed, ſuccoured and aſſiſted, is akin to riches: at leaſt it is not altogether poor: but that poverty which is deſpiſed, rejected, reproached and abandoned, is poor indeed. Now ſuch is ordinarily the poverty of ſeculars; for as they are not poor by their own choice, but by neceſſity, their poverty is not much eſteemed; and foraſmuch as it is not eſteemed, their poverty is poorer than that of the religious: although otherways the poverty of the religious has a very great excellency, and is much more commendable, by reaſon of the vow, and of the intention for which it is choſen.

Complain not then, my dear *Philothea*, of your poverty; for we never complain, but of that which diſpleaſes us; and if poverty diſpleaſes you, you are no longer poor in ſpirit, but rich in affection.

Be not diſconſolate for your not being ſo well ſuccoured as might be neceſſary; for in this conſiſts the excellency of poverty. To be willing to be poor, and not to receive the inconvenience of it, is too great an ambition; for it is to deſire the honour of poverty, and the convenience of riches.

Be not aſhamed to be poor, nor to aſk alms in charity. Receive with humility what ſhall be given you, and take the denial with meekneſs. Remember often the journey our Lady made into *Egypt*, to carry thither her dear child, and how much contempt, poverty, and miſeries ſhe was obliged to ſuffer. If you live thus, you ſhall be very rich in your poverty.

CHAP. XVII.

Of friendſhip; and firſt of that which is evil and frivolous.

LOVE has the firſt place among the paſſions of the ſoul: it is the king of all the motions of the heart, it turns all the reſt towards it, and makes

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us ſuch as is the object of its love. Take good care then, O *Philothea*, to entertain no evil love, for if you do, you will preſently become evil. Now friendſhip is the moſt dangerous love of all; becauſe other loves may be without communication but friendſhip, being wholly grounded upon this, we can hardly have friendſhip with any perſon without partaking of his qualities.

All love is not friendſhip; for one may love, and not be loved, and then there is love, but not friendſhip; becauſe friendſhip is a mutual love, and if the love be not mutual, it is not friendſhip. Nor is it enough that it be mutual, but the parties, that love one another, muſt know their mutual affection, for if they know it not, they ſhall have love, but not friendſhip. There muſt be alſo ſome kind of communication between them, which may be the ground of the friendſhip. Now according to the diverſity of the communications, the friendſhip alſo is diverſe; and the communications are different, according to the variety of the good things which they communicate to each other: if theſe be falſe and vain goods, the friendſhip is alſo falſe and vain; if they be true goods, the friendſhip is true; and the more excellent the goods ſhall be, the more excellent ſhall be the friendſhip. For as that honey is beſt, which is gathered from the bloſſoms of the moſt exquiſite flowers; ſo that love, which is founded upon the moſt exquiſite communication, is the moſt excellent. And as there is honey in *Heraclea* of *Pontus*, which is poiſonous, and makes them mad that eat it, becauſe it is gathered from the *aconite*, which abounds in that country; even ſo the friendſhip, grounded upon the communication of falſe and vicious goods, is altogether falſe and vicious.

The communication of carnal pleaſures is a mutual inclination and brutiſh allurement, which can no more bear the name of a friendſhip among men, than

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that of aſſes and horſes for the like effects: and if there were no other communication in marriage, there would be no friendſhip at all; but becauſe, beſides that, there is a communication in matrimony of life, of induſtry, of goods, of affections, and of an indiſſoluble fidelity, therefore the friendſhip of matrimony is a true and holy friendſhip. A friendſhip that is grounded on the communication of ſenſual pleaſures is quite groſs, and unworthy the name of friendſhip: and ſo is that which is founded on virtues which are frivolous and vain; becauſe theſe virtues depend alſo on the ſenſes. I call thoſe pleaſures ſenſual, which are immediately and principally annexed to the exterior ſenſes; ſuch as the pleaſures to look on beauty, to hear a ſweet voice, to touch, and the like. I call frivolous virtues, certain vain endowments and qualities, which weak minds call virtues and perfections. Obſerve how the greater part of maids, of women, and of young people talk; they ſhall not ſtick to ſay, Such a gentleman has many virtues and perfections, for he dances well, he plays well at all ſort of games he dreſſes himſelf well, he ſings well, he talks well, he looks well: and mountebanks eſteem them the moſt virtuous in their way, that are the greateſt buffoons.

But as all this regards the ſenſes, ſo the friendſhips which proceed from ſuch things as theſe are termed ſenſual, vain and frivolous, and deſerve rather the name of fooliſh fondneſs than of friendſhip: ſuch are ordinarily the friendſhips of young people, which are grounded on curled locks, a good head of hair, ſmiling glances, fine cloaths, affected countenances, and idle talk; friendſhips fitting the age of thoſe lovers, whoſe virtue is as yet only in the bloſſom, and their judgment but in the bud: and indeed ſuch amities as theſe are but tranſitory, and melt away like ſnow in the ſun.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of fond loves.

WHEN theſe fooliſh friendſhips are kept up between perſons of different ſexes, without pretenſions of marriage, they are called fond love. For being but certain embrios, or rather phantoms of friendſhip, they deſerve not the name either of true friendſhip, or of true love, by reaſon of their exceeding great vanity and imperfection. Now by the means of theſe fondneſſes the hearts of men and of women are caught, engaged, and entangled with one another in vain and fooliſh affections, founded upon theſe frivolous communications and wretched complacencies, of which I have been ſpeaking.

And altho' theſe fooliſh loves commonly ſpeaking proceed ſo far as to end at laſt in carnality and downright laſciviouſneſs, yet that is not the firſt deſign and intention of the perſons between whom they paſs; otherwiſe they would not be merely fond loves, but impurities and downright uncleanneſſes. Sometimes even many years may paſs, before any thing directly contrary to the chaſtity of the body ſhall happen between them that are infected with this folly, whilſt they content themſelves with giving their hearts the pleaſure of wiſhes, deſires, ſighs, amorous entertainments, and ſuch like fooleries and vanities; and this upon different pretenſions.

Some have no other deſign, than only to ſatisfy their hearts with loving and being loved, following in this their amorous inclination; and theſe regard nothing in the choice of their loves, but their own taſte and inſtinct: ſo that at the firſt meeting with an agreeable object, without examining the interior or the comportment of the perſon, they ſhall begin this fond communication, and entangle themſelves

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in theſe wretched nets, out of which afterward they have great difficulty to diſengage themſelves. Others let themſelves be carried to fond loves by vanity, eſteeming it no ſmall glory to catch and bind hearts by love. Now theſe aiming at glory in the choice they make, ſet their nets and lay their ſnares in ſpecious, high, rare and illuſtrious places. Others are led away both by their amourous inclination and by vanity at the ſame time; for tho' their hearts be altogether inclined to love, yet will they not engage themſelves in it without ſome advantage of glory. Theſe loves are always naughty, fooliſh and vain: naughty, becauſe they end at length and terminate in the ſin of the fleſh, and becauſe they rob God, the wife, and the huſband, of that love, and conſequently of that heart, which was due to them: fooliſh, becauſe they have neither foundation nor reaſon: vain, becauſe they yield neither profit, honour, nor content: on the contrary they loſe time, are prejudicial to honour, and bring no other pleaſure than that of an eagerneſs in pretending and hoping, without knowing what they would have, or what they would pretend to. For theſe wretched and weak minds ſtill imagine they have I know not what to hope for from the teſtimonies which are given them of reciprocal love, but yet they cannot tell what this is; the deſire of which can never end, but goes on continually, preſſing their hearts with perpetual diſtruſts, jealouſies, and diſquiets.

S. *Gregory Nazianzen*, writing againſt vain women, ſpeaks admirably on this ſubject; take here a ſmall part of his diſcourſe directed indeed to women, yet alſo proper for men. *Thy natural beauty is ſufficient for thy huſband; but if it be for many men, like a net ſpread out for a flock of birds, what will be the conſequence? He ſhall be pleaſing to thee, who ſhall pleaſe himſelf with thy beauty; thou wilt return him glance for glance, look for look; preſently will follow ſmiles and little amorous words, dropt by ſtealth at the beginning,*

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but ſoon after they will become more familiar, and paſs to an open courtſhip. Take heed, O my talking tongue, of telling what will follow: yet will I ſay this one truth; nothing of all thoſe things, which young men and women ſay, and do together in theſe fooliſh complacencies, is exempted from grievous ſtings. All the links of wanton loves hold one by another, and follow one another as one piece of iron, touched by the loadſtone, draws divers others after it.

O how well has this great biſhop ſpoken? What is it you think to do? To give love? No; for no one gives love voluntarily, that does not receive it neceſſarily. He that catches in this chace is likewiſe caught himſelf. The herb *aproxis* receives and conceives fire, as ſoon as it ſees it: our hearts do the like; as ſoon as they ſee a ſoul inflamed with love for them, they are preſently ſet on fire with love for it. But ſome one will ſay, I am willing to entertain ſome of this love, but not to go too far. Alas, you deceive yourſelf, this fire of love is more active and piercing than you imagine; you make account to receive but a ſpark, and you will wonder to ſee, that in a moment it will have taken poſſeſſion of your whole heart, reduced all your reſolutions to aſhes, and your reputation to ſmoke. The wiſe man crieth out; *Who will have pity on a charmer ſtruck by a ſerpent?* Eclus. xii. 13. And I alſo cry after him, O! fooliſh and ſenſeleſs people, think you to charm love, ſo as to be able to manage it at pleaſure? You would play with it, but it will ſting and bite you cruelly: and do you know, what will be ſaid of it? Every one will mock at you, and will laugh that you would undertake to charm down love, and on a falſe aſſurance put into your boſom a dangerous ſerpent, which has ſpoiled and deſtroyed both your ſoul and your honour.

O good God! what blindneſs is this, to play away thus at hazard againſt ſuch frivolous ſtakes, the principal power of our ſoul! Yes, *Philothea*, for God regards not man, but for the ſoul; nor the ſoul, but for

for the will; nor the will, but for the love. Alas! we have not near ſo much love as we ſtand in need of: I mean to ſay, that we fall infinitely ſhort of having love enough, with which to love God; and yet, wretches as we are, we laviſh it away, and pour it out on fooliſh, vain and frivolous things, as if we had to ſpare. Ah! this great God, who hath reſerved to himſelf the whole love of our ſouls in acknowledgement of our creation, conſervation, and redemption, will exact a moſt ſtrict account of all theſe fooliſh deductions we make from it. And if he be to make ſo rigorous an examination of idle words, what will he do of idle, impertinent, fooliſh, and pernicious loves?

The wallnut-tree is very prejudicial to the vines and fields where it is planted; becauſe being ſo large, it draws away all the moiſture of the earth, which cannot afterwards ſuffice to nouriſh the other plants; the leaves are alſo ſo thick, that they make a great and cloſe ſhade; and laſtly, it allures the paſſengers to it, who, to beat down the fruit, ſpoil and trample upon all about it. Theſe fond loves do the like harms to the ſoul, for they wholly poſſeſs her in ſuch manner, and ſo ſtrongly draw to themſelves her motions, that ſhe has not ſtrength left to produce any good work; the leaves, that is, their idle talk, their amuſements and their dalliances, are ſo frequent, that all leiſure time is ſquandered away in them; and finally, they beget ſo many temptations, diſtractions, ſuſpicions, and other bad conſequences, that the whole heart is trampled down and ſpoiled by them. To be ſhort, theſe fond loves do not only baniſh all heavenly love, but alſo the fear of God; they waſte the ſpirit, and weaken the reputation; they are, in a word, the ſport of courts, but the plague of hearts.

CHAP. XIX.

Of true Friendſhips.

LOVE every one, *Philothea*, with a great love of charity; but have no Friendſhip, but with thoſe that can communicate with you the things of virtue. And the more exquiſite the virtues are which ſhall be the matter of your communication, the more perfect ſhall your friendſhip be. If this communication be in the ſciences, the friendſhip to be ſure is very commendable, but ſtill more ſo if it be in the moral virtues, in prudence, diſcretion, fortitude and juſtice. But if your mutual and reciprocal communication have relation to charity, devotion and chriſtian perfection, good God, how precious will this friendſhip be! It will be excellent, becauſe it comes from God; excellent, becauſe it tends to God; excellent, becauſe its very band is God; excellent, becauſe it ſhall laſt eternally in God. O how good it is to love on earth, as they love in heaven; to learn to cheriſh one another in this world as we ſhall do eternally in the next!

I ſpeak not here of the ſimple love of charity, for we muſt have that for all men; but I ſpeak of ſpiritual friendſhip, by which two or three, or more ſouls communicate to one another their devotion, their ſpiritual affections, and make themſelves all but one ſpirit. Such happy Souls may juſtly ſing; *Behold how good and pleaſant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity:* Pſ. cxxxii. 1. For the delicious balm of devotion diſtills out of one of their hearts into the other by a continual participation; inſomuch that it may be ſaid that God has poured out upon this friendſhip *his bleſſing and life* for evermore. Methinks all other friendſhips are but ſhadows in reſpect of this; and that their bonds are but chains of glaſs or of jet, in compariſon of this great bond of holy devotion, which is all of gold.

Make

Make no other kind of friendſhip than this: I ſpeak of ſuch friendſhips as you make, for you muſt not therefore forſake or neglect the friendſhips which nature or former duties oblige you to cultivate with your parents, kindred, benefactors, neighbours and others; I ſpeak of thoſe which you chooſe yourſelf.

Many perhaps will ſay, that we ſhould have no kind of particular affection and friendſhip, becauſe it occupies the heart, diſtracts the mind, and begets envy; but they are miſtaken in their way of thinking: for, becauſe they have ſeen in the writings of many devout authors, that particular friendſhips and extraordinary affections are of infinite prejudice to the religious; they imagine therefore that it is the ſame with regard to the reſt of the world; but there is a great difference; for conſidering that in a well-ordered monaſtery the common deſign of all tends to true devotion, it is not requiſite to make theſe particular communications there, leſt ſeeking in particular that which is common, they ſhould fall from particularities to partialities: but for ſuch as are amongſt worldings, and who deſire to embrace true virtue, it is neceſſary for them to unite themſelves together by a holy and ſacred friendſhip; for by this means they encourage, help, and lead on one another to good. And as they that walk on plain ground, need not to lend one another a hand; but they that are in rugged and ſlippery ways hold one by the other, to walk on more ſecurely; ſo they that are in religious orders have no need of particular friendſhips; but they that are in the world, have need of them, to ſecure themſelves and aſſiſt one another amongſt ſo many dangerous paſſages which they are to paſs. In the world, all conſpire not to the ſame end, all have not the ſame ſpirit; we muſt then without doubt ſeparate ourſelves, and make friendſhips according to our pretenſion: and this particularity makes indeed a partiality, but 'tis a holy partiality, which makes no other diviſion, but that which is betwixt

good and evil, ſheep and goats, bees and hornets; a ſeparation moſt neceſſary.

No one ſurely will deny but that our Lord loved with a more ſweet and more ſpecial friendſhip St. *John*, *Lazarus*, *Martha*, and *Magdalen*, for the ſcripture witneſſes it. We know that S. *Peter* tenderly cheriſhed S. *Mark* and S. *Petronilla*, as S. *Paul* did his *Timothy* and S. *Thecla*. S. *Gregory Nazianzen* boaſts an hundred times of the incomparable friendſhip he had with the great S. *Baſil*, and deſcribes it in this manner: *It ſeemeed that in the one and the other of us there was but one ſoul dwelling in two bodies: and if thoſe are not to be believed, who ſay, that all things are in all things; yet of us two you may believe, that we were both in each one of us, and one in the other: we had both of us one only pretenſion to cultivate virtue, and to accommodate all the deſigns of our Life to future hopes; going in this manner out of this mortal earth, before we died in it.* S. *Auſtin* teſtifies, that S. *Ambroſe* loved S. *Monica* intirely, for the rare virtues he ſaw in her, and that ſhe reciprocally loved him, as an Angel of God. But I am to blame to detain you ſo long in a matter ſo clear. S. *Jerom*, S. *Auſtin*, S. *Gregory*, S. *Bernard*, and all the greateſt ſervants of God, have had very particular friendſhips, without any prejudice to their perfection. S. *Paul* reproaching the diſorders of the *Gentiles*, accuſes them that they were people without affection, that is to ſay, that they had no true friendſhip. And S. *Thomas*, with all the good philoſophers, acknowledges that friendſhip is a virtue: and he ſpeaks of particular friendſhip, ſince, as he ſays, perfect friendſhip cannot be extended to a great many perſons. Perfection therefore conſiſts not in having no friendſhip, but in having none but ſuch as is good, ſaint-like and holy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Of the difference between true and vain friendſhips.

BUT obſerve now, *Philothea*, this important admonition: the honey of *Heraclea*, which is ſo poiſonous, is like the other, which is ſo wholeſome; and there is a great danger of taking the one for the other, or of taking them mixt together: for the goodneſs of the one would not hinder the poiſon of the other. He muſt ſtand upon his guard, that will not be deceived in theſe friendſhips, particulary when they are contracted betwixt perſons of different ſexes, under what pretext ſoever; for the devil often brings a change to thoſe that love: they begin with virtuous love, but if they are not very diſcreet, fond love will begin to mingle itſelf, then ſenſual love, and afterwards carnal love: yea, there is even danger in ſpiritual love, if we are not very much upon our guard; tho' in this it be more difficult to be impoſed upon, becauſe its purity and whiteneſs make the ſpots and ſtains which Satan ſeeks to mingle with it more apparent, and therefore when he takes this in hand, he does it more ſubtilly, and endeavours to ſlip in impurities almoſt inſenſibly.

You may diſtinguiſh worldly friendſhip from that which is holy and virtuous, as the honey of *Heraclea* is known from the other. The honey of *Heraclea* is ſweeter to the tongue than the ordinary honey, becauſe of the juice of the *aconite*, which gives it an addition of ſweetneſs: ſo worldly friendſhip produces ordinarily a great rabble of honeyed words, paſſionate expreſſions with admiration of beauty, behaviour, and other ſenſual qualities; but holy friendſhip ſpeaks a plain and ſincere language, and can commend nothing but virtue and the grace of God, the only foundation on which it ſubſiſts. The honey of *Heraclea* being ſwallowed down, cauſes a giddineſs in

the head: and falſe friendſhip breeds a giddineſs in the mind, which makes perſons ſtagger in chaſtity and devotion, carrying them to affected, wanton and immoderate looks, to ſenſual careſſes, to inordinate ſighs, fooliſh complaints of not being loved, to little, ſtudied, and inticing carriage, to gallantries, to ſeeking of kiſſes, and other familiarities and uncivil favours, which are certain and undoubted preſages of the approaching ruin of chaſtity. But holy friendſhip has no looks but ſimple and modeſt, no careſſes but pure and frank, no ſighs but for heaven, no familiarities but ſpiritual, no complaints but when God is not loved; infallible marks of honeſty. The honey of *Heraclea* troubles the ſight, and this worldly friendſhip troubles the judgment; ſo that they that are infected with it think they do well, when they do ill, and take their excuſes and pretexts for true reaſons: they fear the light and love darkneſs. But holy friendſhip is clear-ſighted, and never hides herſelf, but appears willingly before ſuch as are good. In fine, the honey of *Heraclea* leaves a great bitterneſs in the mouth; ſo falſe friendſhips change into, and terminate in lewd and carnal words and demands, or in caſe of refuſal, in injuries, ſlanders, impoſtures, ſadneſſes, confuſions, and jealouſies, which often end in the loſs of ſenſes and in madneſs. But chaſte friendſhip is always equally honeſt, civil, and amiable, and never changes, but into a more perfect and pure union of ſpirits; a lively image of the bleſſed friendſhip exerciſed in heaven.

St. *Gregory Nazianzen* ſays, that the cry of the *peacock*, when he ſtruts and ſpreads his tail, excites greatly the *peahens* to luſt: when we ſee a man act the *peacock*, dreſs himſelf out, and ſo come to flatter and wheedle and whiſper in the ears of a woman or a maiden, without pretenſion to lawful marriage: Ah! no doubt it is but to incite her to ſome impurity; and every woman of honour will ſtop her ears, that ſhe may not hear they cry of this *peacock*, nor the

voice

voice of this inchanter, who ſeeks ſubtilly to charm her but if ſhe hearken to him, O good God! what an ill preſage will it be of the future loſs of her heart!

Young people who uſe geſtures, glances, and careſſes, or ſpeak words in which they would not be willing to be ſurprized by their fathers, mothers, huſbands, wives, or confeſſors, teſtify by this that they are treating of ſome other thing than honour and conſcience. Our bleſſed Lady was troubled when ſhe ſaw an Angel in the ſhape of a man, becauſe ſhe was alone, and that he gave her extraordinary, tho' heavenly praiſes. O Saviour of the world! purity is afraid of an Angel in the ſhape of a man, and why ſhould not impurity fear a man, even tho' he ſhonld come in the ſhape of an Angel, when he praiſes her with ſenſual and earthly commendations?

CHAP. XXI.

Advices and remedies againſt evil friendſhips.

BUT what remedies againſt this brood and ſpawn of fooliſh loves, fondneſſes and impurities? As ſoon as you ſhall feel the firſt touch of them, turn away from them, and with an abſolute deteſtation of this vanity run to the croſs of our Saviour, and take his crown of thorns, to put it about your heart, to the end theſe little foxes may not come near it. Take good heed of coming to any kind of compoſition with this enemy: ſay not I will hear him, but will do nothing of that which he ſhall ſay to me; I will lend him my ears, but will refuſe him my heart: O no, *Philothea*, for God's ſake be rigorous on theſe occaſions; the heart and the ears correſpond one with another; and as it is impoſſible to ſtop a torrent that has taken its deſcent by the brow of a mountain, ſo is it hard to hinder the love, which has entered in at the ear, from falling ſuddenly down into the heart.

Alcmæon pretended that goats breathe by the ears, and not by the noſtrils, which *Ariſtotle* denies; and I know not how it is: but this I know, that our heart breathes by the ear; and as it ſends forth its own thoughts by the tongue, ſo it draws in the thoughts of others by the ear. Let us then keep a diligent guard upon our ears, that we may not draw in the corrupt air of fooliſh words, for otherwiſe our hearts will ſoon be infected. Hearken to no kind of propoſitions under what pretext ſoever; in this caſe alone there is no danger of being rude and uncivil.

Remember that you have dedicated your heart to God, and that your love having been ſacrificed to him, it would be a ſacrilege to alienate the leaſt part of it from him; rather ſacrifice it to him anew by a thouſand reſolutions and proteſtations; and keeping yourſelf cloſe in them, as a deer within his thicket, call on God, and he will help you, and his love will take yours under his protection, that it may live for him alone.

But if you are already caught in the nets of theſe fooliſh loves; good God! how difficult will it be to get out! Place yourſelf before his divine majeſty, acknowledge in his preſence the greatneſs of your miſery, your frailty and vanity. Then, with the greateſt effort your heart is able to make, deteſt theſe loves you have begun, abjure the vain profeſſion you have made of them, renounce all the promiſes received, and with a great and moſt abſolute will determine in your heart and reſolve never more to enter into theſe paſtimes and entertainments of love.

If you could withdraw yourſelf at a diſtance from the object, I ſhould infinitely approve it: for as they that have been bit by ſerpents, cannot eaſily be cured in the preſence of thoſe that have before been wounded by the ſame; ſo the perſon ſtung with love will hardly be cured of this paſſion, as long as he is near the other who has been wounded with the ſame ſting. Change of place ſerves very much to appeaſe the heats

heats and pains either of grief or of love. The youth, of whom S. *Ambroſe* ſpeaks, in his ſecond book of *Penance*, having made a long journey, returned home altogether freed from thoſe fond loves he had formerly entertained, and ſo much changed, that his fooliſh miſtreſs meeting him, and ſaying, Doſt thou not know me? I am the ſame that I was: Yes, anſwered he, but I am not the ſame I was. Abſence had wrought in him this happy change. And S. *Auſtin* witneſſes, that to mitigate the grief he ſuffered for the death of his friend, he withdrew himſelf from *Tagaſta*, the place where his friend died, and went to *Carthage*.

But what muſt he do that cannot withdraw himſelf? He much abſolutely retrench all particular familiarity, all talking together in private, all amorous looks, all ſmiles, and in general all ſorts of communication and allurements, which may nouriſh this ſtinking and ſmoaky fire: or at moſt, if he be forced to ſpeak with the other party, let it be only to declare with a bold, ſhort and ſerious proteſtation the eternal divorce which he has ſworn. I cry aloud to every one which is fallen into theſe wretched ſnares of fond loves, Cut them, break them, tear them, you muſt not amuſe yourſelf to unſow theſe fooliſh amities, you muſt tear and rend them: ſtand not to untie the knots, but break them or cut them, ſo that the cords and ſtrings may be nothing worth: we muſt keep no meaſures with a love, which is ſo contrary to the love of God.

But after that I ſhall have broken in this manner the chains of this infamous bondage, there will ſtill remain with me ſome feelings, and the marks and prints of the irons will ſtill be imprinted in my feet, that is to ſay, in my affections. No, *Philothea*, they will not, if you have conceived as great a deteſtation of your evil, as it deſerves; for if you have, you ſhall now be moved with no other motion, but that of an extreme horror of this infamous love, and

of all that depends on it; and you ſhall remain free from all other affection towards the forſaken object but that of a moſt pure charity for God's ſake. But if, for the imperfection of your repentance, there ſhould yet remain in you any evil inclinations, procure for your ſoul a mental ſolitude, according to what I have taught you heretofore, and retire yourſelf thither as often as you can, and by a thouſand reiterated ejaculations of the ſpirit renounce all your inclinations, reject them with all your forces; read holy books more than ordinary, go to confeſſion, and communicate more frequently; treat humbly and ſincerely concerning all the ſuggeſtions and temptations which ſhall befall you in this kind, with your director, if you can; or at leaſt with ſome faithful and prudent ſoul; and doubt not but God will ſet you free from all paſſions, provided you continue faithfully in theſe good exerciſes.

Ah! (will you ſay) but will it not be ingratitude to break off a friendſhip ſo unmercifully? O how happy is that ingratitude, which makes us pleaſing to God! But no, I tell you in the name of God, *Philothea*, this will be no ingratitude, but a great benefit, which you ſhall do to your lover: for in breaking your own bonds you ſhall alſo break his, ſince they were common to you both; and tho' for the preſent the other party may not be ſenſible of his happineſs, yet he will acknowledge it ſoon after, and jointly ſing with you in thankſgiving; *O Lord, thou haſt broken my bonds, I will ſacrifice to thee a ſacrifice of praiſe, and call upon thy holy name.* Pſalm. cxv.

CHAP. XXII.

Other advices on the ſubject of friendſhips.

I HAVE another important advice to give you on this ſubject. Friendſhip requires great communication between friends, otherwiſe it can neither grow

grow nor ſubſiſt. Wherefore it often happens that with this communication of friendſhip, divers other communications inſenſibly paſs and glide from one heart to another, by a mutual infuſion and reciprocal intercourſe of affections, inclinations and impreſſions. But this happens eſpecially, when we highly eſteem him whom we love; for then we open our heart in ſuch manner to his friendſhip, that with it his inclinations and impreſſions eaſily enter in their whole extent, be they good or bad. Certainly the *bees*, that gather the honey of *Heraclea*, ſeek nothing but honey, yet with the honey they inſenſibly ſuck the poiſonous qualities of the *aconite*, from which they gather it. Good God, *Philothea*, on theſe occaſions, we muſt carefully put in practice what the Saviour of our ſouls was accuſtomed to ſay, as we learn from the ancients: Be ye good bankers, or changers of money: that is to ſay, receive not bad money with the good, nor baſe gold with the fine; ſeparate that which is precious from that which is vile: for there is ſcarce any perſon that has not ſome imperfection. And what reaſon is there that we ſhould receive promiſcuouſly the ſpots and imperfections of a friend together with his friendſhip? We muſt love him indeed, notwithſtanding his imperfection, but we muſt neither love nor receive his imperfection: for friendſhip requires a communication of good and not of evil. Wherefore as th ey that draw gravel out of the river *Tagus*, ſeparate the gold which they find, to carry it away, and leave the ſand on the banks, ſo they, who have the communication of ſome good friendſhip, ought to ſeparate from it the ſand of imperfections, and not ſuffer it to enter into their ſoul. St. *Gregory Nazianzen* teſtifies, that many loving and admiring St. *Baſil*, were brought to imitate him, even in his outward imperfections, as in ſpeaking ſlow, and with his ſpirit abſtracted, and penſive, in the faſhion of his beard, and in his gait. And we ſee often huſbands,

wives, children, and friends, who having a great eſteem of their friends, parents, huſbands, and wives, get either by condeſcenſion or imitation, a thouſand little ill-humours in their communication of friendſhip, which they have one with another. Now this ought by no means to be ſo, for every one has evil inclinations enough of his own, without charging himſelf with thoſe of others: and friendſhip is ſo far from requiring this, that on the contrary it obliges us mutually to aid and aſſiſt one another, in order to our being freed from all kind of imperfections. We muſt indeed meekly bear with our friend in his imperfections: but we muſt not lead him into imperfections, much leſs import his imperfections into ourſelves. But I ſpeak only of imperfections: for as for ſins, we muſt neither occaſion them, nor tolerate them in our friends. It is either a weak or a wicked friendſhip, to ſee our friend periſh, and not to help him; to ſee him die of an impoſtume, and not to dare to open it with the lancette of correction, to ſave his life: true and living friendſhip cannot ſubſiſt in the midſt of ſins. They ſay the *ſalamander* puts out the fire in which he lies: and ſo ſin deſtroys the friendſhip in which it lodges. If it be but a paſſing ſin, friendſhip will preſently put it to flight by correction; but if it continue and take up its lodging, friendſhip immediately periſhes, for it cannot ſubſiſt but upon the true foundation of virtue; how much leſs then ought we to commit ſin for friendſhip's ſake. A friend is an enemy, when he would lead us to ſin, and he deſerves to loſe the friendſhip, when he would deſtroy and damn the friend. And it is one of the moſt aſſured marks of a falſe friendſhip, to ſee it exerciſed towards a vicious perſon, of whatſoever kind his ſin may be. If he whom we love be vicious, without doubt our friendſhip is vicious? for ſeeing it cannot regard true virtue, it muſt needs be grounded on ſome frivolous

virtue,

virtue, or ſome ſenſual quality. Society made for temporal profit among merchants, has but a ſhadow of true friendſhip; for it is not made for the love of the perſons, but for the love of gain.

Finally, theſe two divine ſentences are two great pillars to ſecure a chriſtian life: the one is that of the wiſe man; *He that feareth God, ſhall likewiſe have a good friendſhip:* The other is that of the Apoſtle St. *James*; *The friendſhip of this world is the enemy God.*

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the exerciſes of exterior mortification.

THEY, who treat of huſbandry and country affairs, tell us, that if one write any word upon a very ſound *almond*, and put it again into the ſhell, ſhutting it up very cloſe, and ſo planting it, all the fruit which that tree ſhall produce will have the ſame word written and engraven upon it. For my part, *Philothea*, I could never approve of their method, who, to reform a man, begin with the exterior, as with the geſtures, with the dreſs, with the hair. On the contrary, I think we ought to begin with the interior. *Be converted to me* (ſaid God, Joel ii.) *with your whole heart. Son, give me thy heart*, Prov. xxiii. For the heart being indeed the ſource of our actions, they are ſuch as the heart is. The divine Spouſe inviting the ſoul, Cantic. v. *Put me*, ſays he, *as a ſeal upon thy heart, as a ſeal upon thy arm.* Yes verily; for whoſoever has *Jeſus Chriſt* in his heart, will quickly have him in all his exterior actions. For this cauſe, dear *Philothea*, I have deſired before all things elſe to engrave and write upon your heart this ſacred word, *Live Jeſus*; being aſſured, that after this your life, which proceeds from the heart, as an *almond tree* from its kernel, will bring forth all its actions, which are its fruits,

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written upon and engraved with that ſame word of ſalvation. And as this ſweet *Jeſus* will live within your heart, ſo will he alſo live in all your comportment, and will appear in your eyes, in your mouth, in your hands, and even in your hair; ſo that you will be able to ſay with S. *Paul, I live now, not I, but Chriſt lives in me.* In a word, he that has gained the heart of a man, has gained the whole man: but even this heart, by which we would begin, requires to be inſtructed, how it ought to frame its outward courſe and behaviour, to the end men may not only ſee holy devotion there, but great wiſdom alſo and diſcretion: for this, I am going to give you in ſhort divers advices.

If you are able to endure faſting, you ſhall do well to faſt ſome days beſides thoſe which are commanded us by the holy Church; for beſides the uſual effect of faſting, which is to elevate the ſpirit, to keep the fleſh under, to exerciſe virtue, and to acquire a greater reward in heaven, it is a great benefit to maintain one's ſelf in the poſſeſſion of reſtraining gluttony, and keeping the ſenſual appetite and the body ſubject to the law of the ſpirit. And although we faſt not very much, yet the enemy fears us more, when he knows we know how to faſt. *Wedneſdays*, *Fridays*, and *Saturdays*, are the days in which the ancient chriſtians exerciſed themſelves moſt in abſtinence: take then ſome of theſe days to faſt in, as much as your devotion and the diſcretion of your director ſhall adviſe you.

I would willingly ſay, as S. *Jerome* ſaid to the good lady *Læta*, *Long and immoderate faſtings diſpleaſe me much, eſpecially in thoſe that are yet in their tender age.* I have learnt by experience, that the young *aſs*, being weary in his journey, ſeeks to go out of the way: that is to ſay, that young people, being brought into infirmities through exceſs of faſting, eaſily turn themſelves to delicacies. The *deer*

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run ill in two ſeaſons, when they are too fat, and when they are too lean. We are greatly expoſed to temptations, both when our body is too much pampered, and when it is too much weakened, for the one makes it unruly whilſt it is at its eaſe, and the other makes it deſperate through uneaſineſs; and as we cannot carry it when it is too fat, ſo it cannot carry us, when it is too lean. The want of this moderation in the uſe of faſting, of diſciplines, of hair ſhirts, and other auſterities, renders unprofitable for the ſervices of charity the beſt years of many; as it did even in S. *Bernard*; who repented that he had uſed over-much auſterity: and the more they have exceeded in the ill treatment of their bodies in the beginning, the more they have been conſtrained to favour them in the end. Had they not done better to have given them an equal treatment proportionable to the offices and labours, to which their condition obliged them?

Both faſting and labour ſerve to mortify and ſubdue the fleſh. Now if the labour you ſhall do be neceſſary for you, or very profitable to the glory of God, I had rather you would ſuffer the pain of the labour, than that of faſting. This is the ſenſe of the church, which on account of labours that are profitable to the ſervice of God, and our neighbour, diſcharges ſuch labourers even from the faſts commanded. It is a pain to ſome to faſt, to others to ſerve the ſick, to viſit priſoners, to hear confeſſions, to preach, to aſſiſt the afflicted, to pray, and to perform ſuch like exerciſes: this latter kind of pain is of greater value than the former; for beſides that it equally ſerves to ſubdue the body, it produces much more deſirable fruits: and therefore generally ſpeaking it is better to preſerve the bodily forces more than might be neceſſary, than to weaken them too much; for we may always bring them down when we will, but we cannot always repair them, when we will.

Methinks

Methinks, we ſhould greatly reverence the words which our bleſſed Saviour ſays to his diſciples, Luke x. 9. *Eat the things that are ſet before you.* It is (in my opinion) a greater virtue to eat, without choice, that which is preſented to you, and in the ſame order as it is preſented, whether it be more or leſs agreeable to your taſte, than to chuſe always the worſt; for although this latter way of living ſeems more auſtere, the other notwithſtanding has more of reſignation; for by this we renounce not only our own taſte, but alſo our own choice; and it is no ſmall auſterity to turn one's taſte to every meat, and keep it in ſubjection to all our occurrences. Beſides, this kind of mortification makes no ſhow, gives no trouble to any man, and is ſingularly proper for a civil life. To put by one meat for to take another, to pick and ſcrape of every diſh, to think nothing well dreſſed, or neat enough, to make myſteries of every bit, betokens a heart too nice and too much ſet upon diſhes and porringers. I eſteem more S. *Bernard's* drinking of oil inſtead of water or wine, than if he had drank wormwood water on purpoſe; for it was a plain ſign, that he thought not on what he drank: and in this unconcernedneſs for what we eat or drink conſiſts the perfection of the practice of this ſacred rule, *Eat that which is ſet before you.* I except notwithſtanding ſuch meats as prejudice the health, or even incommode the ſpirit, as hot, high-ſeaſoned, and windy meats do with relation to many: as alſo certain occaſions, in which nature has need to be recreated and aſſiſted, in order to be able to ſupport ſome labour for the glory of God. A continual and moderate ſobriety is better than violent abſtinences practiſed by fits, and mingled with great relaxations.

Taking the diſcipline has a wonderful virtue to awaken the appetite of devotion, when it is uſed with moderation. The hair-ſhirt mortifies the fleſh very much; but the uſe of it commonly ſpeaking is

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not proper either for married perſons or tender complexions, or for ſuch as have other great pains to ſupport. However upon ſome more ſignal days of penance it may be uſed with advice of a diſcreet confeſſor.

We muſt take the night to ſleep in, every one as much as his conſtitution requires, to enable him to watch and ſpend the day profitably. And becauſe the holy ſcripture in a hundred ways, the examples of the Saints, and natural reaſons do greatly recommend the morning to us, as the beſt and moſt fruitful part of our days, and that our Lord himſelf is named the orient or riſing ſun, and our *bleſſed Lady* the dawning of the day; I think it is a point of virtue to take care to go to reſt early in the evening, that we may be able to awake and to riſe early in the morning; for certainly that time is of all the moſt favourable, the moſt agreeable, and the leaſt expoſed to diſturbance and diſtractions. The very birds do then invite us to awake and praiſe God; ſo that early riſing is ſerviceable both to our health and to holineſs.

Balaam mounted on his aſs was going to king *Balak*: but becauſe he had not a right intention, the Angel waited for him in the way, with a ſword in his hand to kill him: the aſs, that ſaw the Angel, ſtood ſtill three ſeveral times, as reſty: *Balaam* in the mean time beat her cruelly with his ſtaff, to make her go forward; until the beaſt, at the third time falling quite down under *Balaam*, by a great miracle ſpoke to him, ſaying, Numb. xxii. 28. *What have I done to thee? why ſtrikeſt thou me? lo now this third time?* but ſoon after *Balaam*'s eyes were opened, and he ſaw the Angel, who ſaid to him, *Why beateſt thou thy aſs? if ſhe had not turned out of the way, giving place to me, I had ſlain thee, and ſhe ſhould have lived:* Then *Balaam* ſaid to the Angel, *I have ſinned, not knowing that thou didſt ſtand againſt me.* Do you ſee, *Philo-*

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thea, Balaam is the cauſe of the evil, and he ſtrikes and beats his poor aſs, that could not help it. It is often ſo with us; for example, this woman ſees her huſband or her child ſick, and preſently ſhe runs to faſting, to hair-cloth, and to taking the diſcipline, as *David* did on the like occaſion. Alas! my dear friend, you beat the poor aſs, you afflict your body, but it cannot remedy your evil, nor is it on its account that God's ſword is drawn againſt you: correct your heart, which is an idolater of this huſband, and which has ſuffered a thouſand vices in this child, has deſtined it to pride, vanity, and ambition. This man perceives himſelf often to relapſe in a ſhameful manner into the ſin of impurity; an inward remorſe comes againſt his conſcience ſword in hand, to pierce it through with a holy fear; and preſently his heart returning to itſelf, he ſays, *Ah! wicked fleſh, ah! treacherous body, thou haſt betrayed me:* and immediately he lays great blows on his fleſh, with immoderate faſting, exceſſive diſciplining, and unſupportable hair-ſhirts. O poor ſoul, if thy fleſh could ſpeak, as *Balaam*'s aſs did, ſhe would ſay to thee, *Why, O wretch, doſt thou ſtrike me?* It is againſt thee, O my ſoul, that God arms his vengeance, it is thou that art the criminal: why doſt thou lead me into bad company? why doſt thou employ mine eyes, my hands and my lips in wantonneſs? why doſt thou trouble me with impure imaginations? Have thou good thoughts, and I ſhall not have evil motions; do thou keep company with ſuch as are modeſt and chaſte, and I ſhall not be provoked to luſt. Alas! it is thou that throweſt me into the fire, and yet thou wouldſt not have me burn; thou caſteſt ſmoke into my eyes, and wouldſt not have them to be inflamed. And God without doubt ſays to you in theſe caſes, Beat, break, rend, and cruſh to pieces your hearts principally; for it is againſt them that my anger is ſtirred up. Certainly, to cure the itch, it is not ſo needful to waſh or

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to bathe the body, as it is to purify the blood, and refreſh the liver: ſo, to cure us of our vices, it is good indeed to mortify the fleſh, but it is above all things neceſſary to purify our affections well, and to refreſh our hearts. But in all and through all, let us be ſure never to undertake corporal auſterities but with the advice of our ſpiritual guide.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of converſations, and ſolitude.

TO ſeek converſations, and to fly them, are two extremes which are both of them to be blamed in the devotion of thoſe that live in the world, which is that which we are treating of. To ſhun all converſations ſavours of diſdain and contempt of our neighbour; and to be fond of them is a ſign of ſloth and idleneſs. We muſt love our neighbour as ourſelves, and to ſhew that we love him, we muſt not fly being with him; and to teſtify that we love ourſelves, we muſt ſtay with ourſelves, when we are by ourſelves; and we are by ourſelves, when we are alone. *Think firſt of thyſelf*, ſays St. *Bernard, and then of others.* If then nothing preſs you to go out into company, or to receive company at home, ſtay in yourſelf, and entertain yourſelf with your own heart: but if company come to you, or any juſt cauſe invite you to company, go in God's name, *Philothea*, and ſee your neighbour with a good heart and a good eye.

We call thoſe converſations evil which are held with ſome evil intention, or when the company is vicious, indiſcreet and diſſolute; and ſuch as theſe we muſt avoid, as bees ſhun a company of waſps or of hornets. For, as when perſons are bitten by mad dogs, their ſweat, their breath, and their ſpittle is infectious, eſpecially for children, and thoſe of a tender complexion; ſo theſe vicious and diſſolute perſons cannot be frequented, but with hazard and danger

danger, and especially by those whose devotion is as yet but young and tender.

There are some conversations which are unprofitable in all other regards only for recreation, which are held meerly to divert us from our serious occupations: for such as these, as we must not be too much addicted to them, so we may give them the leisure destined for recreation. Other conversations have civility for their end; as in the case of mutual visits, and certain assemblies made to do honour to our neighbour. And as to these, as we ought not to be superstitious in the practice of them, so neither must we be uncivil in contemning them; but modestly comply with our duty in this regard, to the end we may equally avoid both ill breeding and levity.

It remains that we should speak of profitable conversations; such as those of devout and virtuous persons. O *Philothea*, it will be a great benefit to you to meet often with such as these. The vine planted amongst the olive trees bears oily grapes, and which have the taste of olives: and the soul which is often in the company of virtuous people, cannot but partake of their qualities. Drones alone cannot make honey, but with the help of the bees they make it. 'Tis of great advantage to us for the exercise of devotion to converse with them that are devout.

In all conversations, sincerity, simplicity, meekness and modesty are ever to be preserved. There are some sort of people that make no one gesture or motion, but with so much affectation that they give trouble to the company: and as he that would never walk but telling his steps, nor speak but singing, would be troublesome to the rest of mankind; so they who affect an artificial carriage, and do nothing but with an air, are very disagreeable in conversation, and in these there is ever some kind of presumption. Let a moderate chearfulness be ordinarily predominant in our conversation. St. *Romuald* and St. *Anthony* are highly

highly commended, that notwithſtanding all their auſterities, they had always both their countenance and their diſcourſe adorned with joy, gaiety and courteſy. *Rejoice with them, that rejoice.* Rom. xii. 15. And And again I ſay to you with the Apoſtle, *Rejoice always, but in the Lord. Let your modeſty be known to all men.* Phil. iv. 4. To rejoice in our Lord, the ſubject of your joy muſt not only be lawful, but alſo decent; and this I ſay, becauſe there are ſome things lawful, which yet are not decent: and to the end your modeſty may be known to all, keep yourſelf from all inſolences, which are always reprehenſible. To cauſe one to fall down, to black another's face, to prick or pinch a third, to hurt a fool, are ſottiſh and inſolent merriments.

But ſtill beſides that mental ſolitude, to which you may retreat, even amidſt the greateſt converſations (as I have heretofore declared, P. ii. Ch. 12) you ought to love local and real ſolitude: not ſo as to go into the deſerts, as S. *Mary* of *Egypt*, S. *Paul*, S. *Antony*, S. *Arſenius*, and the other ancient ſolitaries did; but to be for ſome time by yourſelf in your chamber, or in your garden, or in ſome other place, where you may moſt to your liking withdraw your ſpirit into your heart, and recreate your ſoul with good meditations and holy thoughts, or by ſome ſpiritual reading; after the example of the great biſhop of *Nazianzum*, who, ſpeaking of himſelf, ſays, *I walked myſelf with myſelf about ſun-ſetting, and paſſed the time upon the ſea-ſhore; for I am accuſtomed to uſe this recreation to refreſh myſelf, and to ſhake off a little my ordinary troubles:* and thereupon he diſcourſes of the good reflections he made, which I mentioned to you in another place: and after the example of St. *Ambroſe*, of whom St. *Auſtin* relates, that often going into his chamber (for entrance was denied to no man) he always ſaw him reading, and that after having ſtayed awhile, for fear of interrupting him, he went out

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again without ſpeaking a word, thinking that the little time that remained to this great paſtor for recruiting and recreating his ſpirit after the hurry of ſo many affairs as he had upon his hands, ought not to be taken from him. And when the Apoſtles one day had told our Lord how they had preached and how much they had done, he ſaid to them, (Mark vi. 31.) *Come ye apart into a deſert place, and reſt a little.*

CHAP. XXV.

Of decency in attire.

S'T. *Paul* deſires that devout women (and the ſame is to be ſaid of men) ſhould be attired *in decent apparel, adorning themſelves with modeſty and ſobriety.* 1. Tim. ii. 9. Now the decency of apparel and other ornaments depends on the matter, the form, and the cleanneſs of them. As to the cleanneſs, it ſhould be almoſt always equal in our apparel, on which as much as poſſible, we ſhould not ſuffer any kind of dirt or filth. The exterior neatneſs repreſents in ſome manner the cleanneſs of the interior; and God himſelf requires corporal cleanneſs in thoſe that approach his altars, and have the principal charge of devotion.

As to the matter and form of our attire, the decency of it is to be conſidered according to the ſeveral circumſtances of the time, the age, the quality, the company, and the occaſions. People are ordinarily better dreſſed on feſtival days, and this in proportion to the ſolemnity of the feaſt which is celebrated: in times of penance, as in *Lent*, their ornaments are laid aſide; at weddings they put on wedding-garments; at funeral aſſemblies they uſe mourning; when they are near the prince, they ſet themſelves off to the beſt advantage; which they neglect when they are only amongſt their own domeſticks.

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The married woman may and ought to adorn herſelf, when ſhe is with her huſband and he deſires it; but if ſhe ſhould do ſo when ſhe is at a diſtance from him, it will be aſked, whoſe eyes ſhe deſires to favour with that particular care? A greater liberty in point of ornaments is allowed to maidens, becauſe they may lawfully deſire to appear agreeable to many, although with no other intent than to gain one by holy marriage. Neither is it eſteemed amiſs that widows, who purpoſe to marry, ſhould adorn themſelves in ſome meaſure, ſo they ſhew no fooliſh levity, for having already been miſtreſſes of families, and paſſed through the griefs of widowhood, they ſhould be conſidered as being of a more mature and ſettled mind. But as for thoſe that are widows indeed, not only in body but alſo in heart, no other ornament becomes them but humility, modeſty and devotion: for if they have a mind to make men in love with them, they are not widows indeed; and if they have no ſuch deſire, why do they carry about them the inſtruments of love? He that will not receive gueſts, muſt pull down the ſign from his houſe. Old people are always ridiculous when they have a mind to make themſelves gay; this is a folly which is only ſupportable in youth.

Be neat, *Philothea*, let nothing hang looſe about you, or be ill put on: It is a neglect of them with whom we converſe, to come into their company in uncomely apparel; but then avoid all affectation, vanities, curioſities, and levities in your dreſs. Keep yourſelf always, as much as poſſible, on the ſide of plainneſs and modeſty, which without doubt is the greateſt ornament of beauty, and the beſt excuſe for the want of it.

S. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* iii. 3. admoniſhes women in particular not to wear their hair much curled and frizzled in rings and wreaths; but men, who are ſo weak as to amuſe themſelves about ſuch toys, are juſtly derided

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for their effeminacy; and even women, that are ſo vain, are counted but weak in their chaſtity; at leaſt, if they have any, it is not to be ſeen amidſt ſo many toys and fopperies. They ſay, they think no evil in theſe things; but I reply, (as I have done elſewhere) that the devil thinks a great deal. For my part, I would have my devouts, whether men or women, the beſt clad of the company, but the leaſt pompous and affected: and, as it is ſaid in the proverb, I would have them adorned with gracefulneſs, decency, and dignity. St. *Lewis* ſays in one word, that each one ſhould dreſs according to his condition; ſo that the wiſe and the good may have no reaſon to ſay, you do too much, nor young people to ſay, you do too little. But in caſe young people will not content themſelves with what is decent, we muſt conform to the judgment of the wiſe.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of diſcourſe; and firſt how we muſt ſpeak of God.

PHyſicians make a great judgment of the health or ſickneſs of a man, by looking upon his tongue; ſo our words are the true indications of the qualities of our ſouls. *By thy words* (ſays our Saviour, *Matt.* xii. 37. *thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.* We readily carry our hand to the pain that we feel, and the tongue to the love we entertain.

If then, *Philothea*, you are in love with God, you will often ſpeak of God, in your familiar diſcourſes with thoſe of your houſehold, with your friends, and with your neighbours: *For the mouth of the juſt will meditate on wiſdom, and his tongue will ſpeak judgment.* Pſ. xxxvi. 30. As bees with their little mouths meddle with nothing but honey; ſo ſhould your tongue be always ſweetened with its God, and ſhould find no

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greater pleaſure, than to feel the ſweet praiſes and bleſſings of his name flowing between its lips; as they ſay of S. *Francis*, who uſed to ſuck and lick his lips after he had pronounced the holy name of the Lord, to draw as it were from thence the greateſt ſweetneſs in the world.

But ſpeak always of God, as of God; that is, reverently and devoutly; not with oſtentation or affectation, but with a ſpirit of meekneſs, charity, and humility, diſtilling as much as you may, as it is ſaid of the ſpouſe in the *Canticles*, Cant. iv. 11. the delicious honey of devotion and of the things of God, drop by drop, into the ears ſometimes of one, ſometimes of another, praying to God in ſecret in your ſoul, that it would pleaſe him to make this holy dew ſink into the heart of thoſe that hear you.

Above all things, this angelical office muſt be done meekly and ſweetly; not by way of correction, but by way of inſpiration: for it is wonderful how powerfully a ſweet and amiable manner of propoſing good things draws the hearts of the hearers.

Never therefore ſpeak of God, nor of devotion, in a thoughtleſs way, or for ſpeaking ſake, but always with attention and reverence; which I ſay, to deliver you from a remarkable vanity which is found in many, who make profeſſion of devotion, who upon every occaſion are ſpeaking words of piety and godlineſs by way of entertainment, without any thought of what they ſay; and after they have ſpoken them, they imagine themſelves to be ſuch as their words teſtify, which indeed they are not.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of modeſty of words, and the reſpect we owe to perſons.

IF any offend not in words, ſays St. *James*, Chap. iii. 2. *he is a perfect man.* Be exceeding careful never

to let ſlip an unſeemly word: for although you ſpeak it not with an ill intention, yet they that hear it may take harm by it. An evil word falling into a weak heart, ſpreads itſelf like a drop of oil falling on linen; and ſometimes it ſo ſeizes on the heart, that it fills it with a thouſand unclean thoughts and temptations to luſt: for as the poiſon of the body enters by the mouth, ſo the poiſon of the heart enters by the ear, and the tongue which utters it is a murtherer; for although perhaps the poiſon, which it has caſt forth, has not wrought its effect, becauſe it found the hearts of the hearers guarded with ſome preſervative, yet there wanted no malice in the tongue to have cauſed them to die. And let no man tell me that he has no ſuch thought; for our Lord, who knows all thoughts, has ſaid, *That out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh:* And if we think no evil on ſuch occaſions, yet the enemy thinks a great deal, and always ſecretly makes uſe of theſe evil words, to pierce the heart of ſome one. They ſay, that ſuch as have eaten the herb *angelica*, have always a ſweet and agreeable breath: and they that have honeſty and chaſtity, which is an angelical virtue, in their hearts, have their words always clean, modeſt and chaſte. As for things that are indecent and obſcene, the Apoſtle will not once have them named amongſt us, aſſuring us, *That nothing ſo much corrupteth good manners as wicked diſcourſe.*

If theſe diſhoneſt words be ſpoken under a diſguiſe, with affectation and ſubtilty, then are they infinitely more poiſonous: for as the ſharper a dart is, the more eaſily it entereth into our bodies; ſo the more ſharp a wicked word is, the more it penetrates into our hearts; and they that eſteem themſelves gallant men for ſpeaking ſuch words in converſation, know not indeed the end for which converſations are held: for they ſhould be like ſwarms of *bees*, gathered together to make honey by ſome ſweet and virtuous entertainment;

ment; and not like a neſt of *waſps*, who come together to ſuck corruption. If ſome fool ſpeak unſeemly words to you, ſhew him that your ears are offended with them, either by turning yourſelf away, or by ſome other means, as your diſcretion ſhall direct you.

It is one of the worſt qualities a wit can have to be a ſcoffer: God extremely hates this vice, and has heretofore inflicted ſtrange puniſhments for it. Nothing is ſo contrary to charity, and much more to devotion, as the deſpiſing and contemning our neighbour: now deriſion and mockery is never without this contempt, and therefore it is a very great ſin; ſo that the divines have reaſon to ſay, that ſcoffing is the worſt kind of offence a man can be guilty of againſt his neighbour by words; for other offences are committed with ſome eſteem of him that is offended, but this is done with ſcorn and contempt.

As for certain jeſting words, which are ſpoken by one to another by way of a modeſt and innocent mirth, they belong to the virtue called *Eutrapelia* by the *Greeks*, which we may call *good converſation*; and by theſe we take an honeſt and friendly recreation from ſuch frivolous occaſions as human imperfections furniſh us with: only we muſt take heed of paſſing from this honeſt mirth to ſcoffing; for ſcoffing provokes to laughter in the way of ſcorn and contempt of our neighbour; but mirth and drollery excite laughter by an innocent liberty, confidence, and familiar freedom, joined to the wittineſs of ſome conceit. St. *Lewis*, when the religious offered to ſpeak to him after dinner, of high and ſublime matters, told them, *It is not now a time to alledge texts, but to recreate ourſelves with ſome chearful conceits: let every man ſay, what he has a mind, innocently*; which he ſaid in favour of the nobility that were then about him, to receive marks of kindneſs from his majeſty. But let us remember, *Philothea*, ſo to paſs the time in recreation, as to take good care of holy eternity by devotion.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of raſh judgments.

JUDGE not, and you ſhall not be judged; (ſays the Saviour of our ſouls) *Condemn not, and you ſhall not be condemned.* St. *Luke* vi. 37. No (ſays the holy Apoſtle, Cor. iv. 5. *Judge not before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the heart.* O how diſpleaſing are raſh judgments to God! The judgments of the children of men are raſh, becauſe they are not the judges one of another; and in judging they uſurp to themſelves the office of our Lord. They are raſh, becauſe the principal malice of ſin depends on the intention and counſel of the heart, which is a ſecret of darkneſs to us. They are raſh, becauſe every one has enough to do to judge himſelf, without taking upon him to judge his neighbour. In order to our not being judged, it is equally neceſſary to refrain from judging others, and to take care to judge ourſelves. For as our Lord forbids us the one, ſo the Apoſtle enjoins us the other, ſaying, that *if we judged ourſelves we ſhould not be judged.* But, O good God, we do quite the contrary; for what is forbidden us we ceaſe not to do, judging our neighbour on every occaſion; and what is commanded us, which is to judge ourſelves, we never put in practice.

We muſt apply remedies againſt raſh judgments according to their different cauſes. There are ſome hearts which are ſour, bitter, and harſh by their nature, and which make all things bitter and ſour which they receive, turning *judgment* (as the prophet ſays, *Amos* v. 7.) *into wormwood*, by never judging their neighbour but with all rigour and harſhneſs. Theſe have great need to fall into the hands of a good ſpiri-

tual phyſician; for this bitterneſs of heart, being natural to them, is hard to overcome: and though in itſelf it be not a ſin, but only an imperfection, yet it is dangerous, becauſe it introduces and cauſes to reign in the ſoul raſh judgment and detraction. Some judge raſhly, not through harſhneſs, but through pride, imagining, that the more they depreſs the honour of other men they raiſe their own. Arrogant and preſumptuous ſpirits, who admire themſelves, and place themſelves ſo high in their own eſteem, that they look on all the reſt as mean and abject. *I am not like the reſt of men*, ſaid the fooliſh *Phariſee*, Luke xviii. 11. Others have not this manifeſt pride, but take only a certain little ſatisfaction to conſider the evil of other men, to reliſh the more agreeably, and make others to reliſh the contrary good, with which they think themſelves endowed. And this complacency is ſo ſecret and imperceptible, that if one have not a good ſight, one cannot diſcover it; and they themſelves, that are tainted with it, do not know it, if ſome one do not make them ſenſible of it. Others, to flatter and excuſe themſelves to themſelves, and to aſſuage the remorſe of their own conſciences, very willingly judge others to be vicious, in the ſame kind of vice to which they themſelves are addicted, or in ſome other as great; thinking, that the multitude of offenders makes their ſin leſs blameable. Many give themſelves the liberty to judge raſhly, merely for the pleaſure they take in giving their opinion and their conjectures of the manners and humours of perſons, by way of exerciſing their wit; and if unhappily they ſometimes light upon the truth in their judgment, their boldneſs and deſire to go on grows upon them in ſuch manner that they are hardly to be diverted from it. Others judge through paſſion, thinking always well of what they love, and always ill of what they hate; excepting only one caſe, very wonderful and yet true, in which the exceſs of love

incites them to make an ill judgment of that which they love; a monſtrous effect, but proceeding always from an impure, imperfect, troubled and diſtempered love; and this is jealouſy, which, as every one knows, on a ſimple look, on the leaſt ſmile in the world, condemns the perſon beloved of diſloyalty or adultery. In fine, fear, ambition, and other ſuch weakneſſes of the mind, often contribute very much towards the breeding of ſuſpicions and raſh judgments.

But what remedies? They who drink the juice of the herb in *Æthiopia*, called *ophiuſa*, imagine that they every where ſee ſerpents and frightful things: ſo they who have ſwallowed down pride, envy, ambition, and hatred, think every thing they ſee evil and blameable. Thoſe others to be healed muſt drink palm wine: and as for theſe I ſay the ſame, drink as much as you can of the ſacred wine of charity, which ſhall deliver you from thoſe bad humours, which cauſe you to make theſe perverſe judgments. Charity is afraid to meet evil, ſo far is ſhe from going to ſeek after it; and when ſhe meets it, ſhe turns away her face, and takes no notice of it: at the firſt noiſe of it, ſhe ſhuts her eyes before ſhe ſees it: and afterwards believes with a holy innocency, that it was not evil, but only the ſhadow or ſome apparition of evil; and if ſhe cannot help ſometimes ſeeing and acknowledging it to be evil indeed, ſhe preſently turns from it, and endeavours to forget the figure of it. Charity is the ſovereign remedy againſt all evils, but eſpecially againſt this. All things appear yellow to the eyes of them that are ill of the yellow jaundice; and they ſay, that to cure them of this evil they muſt wear *celandine* under the ſoles of their feet. The ſin of raſh judgment is indeed a ſpiritual jaundice, and makes all things appear evil to the eyes of them who are infected with it; he that will be cured of it, muſt apply the remedies, not to his eyes,

not

not to his underſtanding, but to his affections, which are the feet of the ſoul. If your affections are mild, your judgment will be mild: if your affections are charitable, your judgment will alſo be charitable. I ſhall here preſent you with three admirable examples. *Iſaac* had ſaid that *Rebecca* was his ſiſter; *Abimelech* ſaw him playing with her, that is to ſay careſſing her in a tender manner, *Gen.* xxvi. 8. and preſently he judged ſhe was his wife; a malicious eye would rather have judged her to have been his harlot, or if ſhe were his ſiſter, that he had been inceſtuous: But *Abimelech* followed the moſt charitable opinion he could gather from ſuch an action. We muſt always do the like, *Philothea*, ever judging in favour of our neighbour, as much as ſhall be poſſible? and if one action could have an hundred faces, we ſhould always look on that which is the faireſt. Our bleſſed Lady was great with child, St. *Matt.* i. 9. and St. *Joſeph* plainly perceived it; but becauſe on the other hand he ſaw her quite holy, pure, and angelical, he could not believe that ſhe became with child by any unlawful way; ſo that he reſolved, in leaving her privately, to leave the judgment of it to God: and though the argument was very ſtrong to make him conceive an ill opinion of this Virgin, yet he would never judge her by it: and why? becauſe (ſays the Spirit of God) he was a juſt man. A juſt man, when he can no longer excuſe either the action, or the intention of him, whom otherwiſe he ſees to be virtuous, nevertheleſs will not judge him, but puts the remembrance of it out of his mind, and leaves the judgment to God. Thus our bleſſed Saviour on the croſs, *Luke* xxiii. 24. not being able altogether to excuſe the ſin of them that crucified him, yet at leaſt extenuated the malice of it, by alledging their ignorance. When we cannot excuſe the ſin, let us at leaſt render it worthy of compaſſion, attributing it to the moſt tolerable cauſe it can have, ſuch as ignorance or infirmity.

But may we never then judge our neighbour? No verily, never. It is God, O *Philothea*, that judges malefactors in publick juſtice. It is true he uſes the voice of the magiſtrates, to make himſelf intelligible to our ears; they are his interpreters, and ought to pronounce nothing but what they have learnt of him, as being his oracles; if they do otherwiſe, following their own paſſions, then it is they indeed that judge, and that conſequently ſhall be judged: for it is forbidden to men, in quality of men, to judge others.

To ſee or know a thing is not to judge it: for judgment, at leaſt according to the phraſe of the ſcripture, preſuppoſes ſome difficulty, great or ſmall, true, or apparent, which is to be decided; wherefore it ſays, *John.* iii. 18. *That he who believeth not is already judged*, becauſe there is no doubt of his damnation. It is not then ill done to doubt of our neighbour? No, for we are not forbidden to doubt, but to judge: however, it is not allowable either to doubt, or to ſuſpect any farther than preciſely ſo far as reaſons and arguments may conſtrain us to doubt, otherwiſe our doubts and ſuſpicions will be raſh.

If ſome evil eye had ſeen *Jacob* when he kiſſed *Rachel* by the well, or had ſeen *Rebecca* receive bracelets and ear-ings from *Eliezer*, a man unknown in that country, he would no doubt have thought ill of theſe two patterns of chaſtity; but without reaſon or ground; for when an action is of itſelf indifferent, it is a raſh ſuſpicion to draw an ill conſequence from it, unleſs many circumſtances give ſtrength to the argument. It is alſo a raſh judgment to draw an argument from an action, to blame the perſon: but this I ſhall explain more clearly by-and-by.

In fine, thoſe that have a good care of their conſciences, are not very ſubject to raſh judgment: for as the bees when they ſee miſts or cloudy weather, keep themſelves cloſe in their hives, to order their honey; ſo the thoughts of good ſouls go not out after objects

objects that are in a miſt, or amidſt the cloudy actions of their neighbours; but to avoid the meeting of them, they withdraw themſelves into their own hearts, there to order the good reſolutions of their own amendment.

It is the part of an unprofitable ſoul, to amuſe herſelf with examining into other mens lives: I except ſuch as have the charge of others, whether in families or in common-wealths, for a good part of their conſcience conſiſts in looking to or watching over the conduct of others: let them then do their duty with love, and when the have done that, let them keep themſelves within themſelves as to this regard.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of detraction.

RASH judgment produces uneaſineſs, contempt of one's neighbour, pride, complacency in one's ſelf, and a hundred other moſt pernicious effects; among which detraction has one of the firſt places, as being the true plague of converſations. O that I had one of the burning coals of the holy altar, to touch the lips of men, to the end that their iniquities might be taken away, and their ſin cleanſed, in imitation of the ſeraphim that purified the mouth of the prophet *Iſaias!* Iſai. vi. He that could deliver the world from detraction might free it from a great part of the ſins of iniquity.

Whoſoever takes away unjuſtly from his neighbour his good name, beſides the ſin he commits, is bound to make reparation, though differently, according to the diverſity of the detraction: for no man can enter into heaven with the goods of another; and amongſt all exterior goods, a good name is the beſt. Detraction is a kind of murther: for we have three lives, the ſpiritual which conſiſts in the grace of God; the corporal which depends on the ſoul; and the civil,

which conſiſts in our good name: ſin deprives us of the firſt, death takes away the ſecond, and detraction robs us of the third. But the detractor by one blow of his tongue commonly commits three murthers; he kills his own ſoul, and the ſoul of him that hears him, by a ſpiritual murther, and takes away the civil life from him whom he detracts: for as St. *Bernard* ſays, both he that detracts, and he that hearkens to the detracter, have the devil about them; for the one hath him in his tongue, and the other in his ear. *David*, ſpeaking of detracters, ſays, *They have whet their tongues like that of the ſerpent*, Pſ. 139. Now the ſepent's tongue is forked, and has two points (as *Ariſtotle* ſays) and ſo is that of the detracter, who at one ſtroke ſtings and poiſons the ear of the hearer, and the reputation of him againſt whom he is ſpeaking.

I conjure you then, moſt dear *Philothea*, never to detract any one either directly or indirectly: take heed of impoſing falſe crimes and ſins on your neighbour; or of diſcovering his ſecret ſins, or of aggravating thoſe that are manifeſt; or of making an evil interpretation of his good works; or of denying the good which you know to be in him, or diſſembling it maliciouſly, or diminiſhing it by words: for in all theſe ways you will highly offend God; but moſt of all by falſe accuſations, and denying the truth to the prejudice of your neighbour; for it is a double ſin, to lye and to hurt your neighbour both at once.

They that, in order to detract, make prefaces of honour, or mingle their diſcourſe with pretty airs or facetious conceits, are the moſt ſubtle and venomous detracters of all. I proteſt (ſay they) I love him, and in other things he is a gallant man; but yet the truth muſt be told, he did ill to commit ſuch a treachery: ſhe is a very virtuous maid, but ſhe was ſurprized; and ſuch like little flouriſhes. Do you not ſee the artifice? He that would ſhoot with a bow, draws the arrow as near to himſelf

himſelf as he can, but it is only to ſhoot it away with greater force. Theſe others ſeem to draw their detractions towards themſelves, but it is only to ſhoot them away with greater force, that they may pierce deeper into the hearts of the hearers. The detraction, which is uttered by way of a witty jeſt, is ſtill more cruel than all the reſt. For as the hemlock is not of itſelf a very preſent poiſon, but ſlow, and which may be eaſily remedied, yet being taken with wine is irremediable; ſo detraction, which of itſelf might paſs lightly in at one ear, and, as the ſaying is, out at another, ſticks faſt in the mind of the hearers, when it is couched in ſome ſubtle and merry jeſt. *They have* (ſays David) *the venom of aſps under their lips.* The bite of the aſp is almoſt imperceptible, and its venom at the firſt breeds a delightful itching, by means of which the heart and the bowels open themſelves, and receive the poiſon, againſt which afterward there is no remedy.

Say not ſuch a one is a drunkard, although you have ſeen him drunk; nor that he is an adulterer, becauſe he has been ſurprized in that ſin; nor that he is inceſtuous, for having found him in that unhappy caſe: for one only act gives not the name to a thing. The ſun ſtood ſtill once in favour of the victory of *Joſue*, and was darkened another time in favour of that of our Saviour; yet none will ſay that the ſun is either immoveable or dark. *Noah* was once drunk, and *Lot* another time, and this latter alſo committed a great inceſt, yet neither the one nor the other were drunkards, nor was the latter an inceſtuous perſon; nor was S. *Peter* a bloodſhedder, for having once ſhed blood; nor a blaſphemer, though he once blaſphemed. To have the name of a vice or a virtue, one muſt have made ſome progreſs in it, and have come to a habit. It is then an impoſition to ſay a man is paſſionate, or a robber, becauſe we have ſeen him once in a paſſion, or guilty of ſtealing. Although a man have been a long time

vicious, yet we run a riſk of belying him, if we call him vicious. *Simon* the leper called *Magdalen* a ſinner, becauſe ſhe had been ſo not long before; yet he belied her, for ſhe was then no longer a ſinner, but a moſt holy penitent; and therefore our Saviour took her cauſe into his protection. The vain *Phariſee* held the publican for a great ſinner, S. Luke xviii. or even perhaps an unjuſt man, an adulterer, an extortioner; but he was greatly deceived, for at that very time he was juſtified. Alas! ſince the goodneſs of of God is ſo great, that one moment ſuffices to obtain and receive his grace, what aſſurance can we have, that he, who was yeſterday a ſinner, is ſo to-day? The day that is paſt ought not to judge the day preſent, nor the preſent day judge that which is paſt; there is none but the laſt day which judges all. We can then never ſay a man is wicked, without danger of lying; all that we can ſay (in caſe we muſt ſpeak) is, that he did ſuch bad actions, that he lived ill at ſuch a time, that he doth ill for the preſent; but we muſt draw no conſequence from yeſterday to this day, nor from this day to yeſterday, much leſs to to-morrow.

Now, though we muſt be extremely tender in point of ſpeaking ill of our neighbour, yet muſt we take heed of an extremity into which ſome fall, who, to avoid detraction, commend and ſpeak well of vice. If a perſon be indeed a detracter, ſay not, to excuſe him, that he is a frank and free ſpeaker; if a perſon be notoriouſly vain, ſay not that he is genteel and neat; and never call dangerous familiarities, by the name of ſimplicity and innocence; nor diſobedience by the name of zeal, nor arrogance by the name of freedom, nor laſciviouſneſs by the name of friendſhip. No, dear *Philothea*, we muſt not think to avoid the vice of detraction, in ſuch manner, as to favour, flatter, or cheriſh other vices; but we muſt roundly and freely ſpeak evil of evil, and blame that which is blameable; for in doing this we glorify

God,

God, provided we obſerve the following conditions.

To ſpeak againſt the vices of another commendably, it is neceſſary that the profit either of him of whom we ſpeak, or of them to whom we ſpeak, require it. For inſtance, the indiſcreet familiarities of ſuch and ſuch, which are manifeſtly dangerous, are related in the company of young maids: or the liberties taken by this or that perſon, in their words or geſtures, which are plainly laſcivious: if I do not freely blame this evil, but rather excuſe it, theſe tender ſouls, who hear of it, will take occaſion to give themſelves ſome ſuch like liberties. Their profit then requires, that I ſhould reprehend with all freedom theſe things upon the ſpot, except I could reſerve this good office to be done better, and with leſs prejudice to the perſons ſpoken of, on ſome other occaſion.

Beſides it is alſo requiſite, that it belong to me to ſpeak on this ſubject; as when I am one of the chief of the company, and that, if I ſhould not, it would look as if I approved the vice; for if I be one of the leaſt, I muſt not take upon me to paſs my cenſure: but above all, it is neceſſary that I be exactly juſt in my words, that I may not ſay one ſingle word too much. For example: If I blame the familiarity of this young man, and that young maid, becauſe it is too indiſcreet and dangerous: Good God, *Philothea*, I muſt hold the ballance ſo even, as not to make the matter heavier, no not one grain. If there be but only a weak appearance, I will ſay nothing more; if but a mere indiſcretion, I will give it no worſe name; if there be neither indiſcretion nor real appearance of evil, but only that ſome malicious ſpirit may take from thence a pretext to ſpeak ill, either I will ſay nothing at all, or ſay that ſame, and no more. My tongue, while I am ſpeaking of my neighbour, is in my mouth like a razor in the hand of a ſurgeon, that would cut between the ſinews and the

the tendons. The blow I ſhall give muſt be ſo juſt, as to ſay neither more nor leſs than the truth. In fine, it muſt be our principal care in blaming any vice, to ſpare, as much as may be, the perſon in whom it is.

It is true, that of infamous, publick, and notorious ſinners, we may ſpeak freely, ſo that it be with the ſpirit of charity and compaſſion, and not with arrogancy and preſumption, nor to take a complacency in the evils of others; which latter is always the part of a mean and abject heart. I except amongſt all, the declared enemies of God and his church, for thoſe we muſt cry down as much as we can; ſuch as the ſects of hereticks, and ſchiſmaticks, and ringleaders of them: it is charity to cry out againſt the wolf when he is among the ſheep, yea wherever he is.

Every one takes the liberty to judge and cenſure princes, and to ſpeak ill of whole nations, according to the diverſity of affections they bear them. *Philothea*, keep off from this fault; for beſides the offence to God, it may bring you into a thouſand quarrels.

When you hear any one ſpoken ill of, make the accuſation doubtful, if you can do it juſtly; if you cannot, excuſe the intention of the party accuſed; if that cannot be done, expreſs a compaſſion for him, divert the diſcourſe, remembering yourſelf, and putting the company in mind, that they, who do not fall, owe all the thanks of it to God: recall the detracter to himſelf by ſome mild way, and ſpeak ſome other good things of the party offended, if you know of any.

CHAP. XXX.

Some other advices touching diſcourſe.

LET your ſpeech be meek, frank, ſincere, open, plain, and faithful: take heed of equivocations, artifices,

artifices, and diſſimulations; for though it is not good to tell all ſorts of truth, yet it is never allowable to go againſt the truth. Accuſtom yourſelf never to tell a lie knowingly, neither by way of excuſe, or otherwiſe; remembering always, that God is the God of truth. If you tell a lie unawares, and can correct it upon the ſpot by ſome explication or reparation, fail not to do it: a true excuſe has much more grace and force to bear one harmleſs than a lie.

Though one may ſometimes diſcreetly and prudently diſguiſe and hide the truth by ſome ſlight of words, yet muſt not that be uſed but in matters of importance, when the glory and ſervice of God manifeſtly require it: in any other caſe, ſuch artifices are dangerous; for as the holy ſcriptures ſaith, *The Holy Spirit will have nothing to do with the deceitful.* Wiſdom i. No artifice is ſo good and deſirable as plain dealing: worldly prudences and carnal artifices belong to the children of the world; but the children of God walk uprightly, and their heart is without guile. *He that walketh ſincerely* (ſays the wiſe man, Prov. x. 9.) *walketh confidently.* Lying, double dealing, and diſſembling, are always ſigns of a weak and mean ſpirit. S. *Auſtin* had ſaid, in the fourth book of his *Confeſſions*, *that his ſoul, and that of his friend, were but one ſoul; and that he had a horror for his life after the death of his friend, becauſe he was not willing to live by halves; and yet that for the ſame cauſe he was unwilling to die, leſt his friend ſhould die wholly.* Theſe words afterwards ſeemed to him too artificial and affected, inſomuch that he recalled them in his book of *Retractations*, and cenſured them as fooliſh. Do you ſee, dear *Philothea*, how tender this holy and beautiful ſoul was with regard to any affectation in words. Certainly fidelity, plainneſs, and ſincerity in words are an ornament to a Chriſtian life: *I have ſaid*, ſaid holy *David*, Pſ. xxxviii. *I will take heed to*

my

my ways, that I offend not in my tongue: And again, Pſ. cxl. *Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door which may ſhut up my lips.* It is an advice of the king St. *Lewis* not to contradict any one in diſcourſe, unleſs it were either ſin or ſome great prejudice to acquieſce to him; and this to avoid all conteſts and diſputes. But when it is neceſſary to contradict any one, or to oppoſe one's own opinion to that of another, we muſt uſe great mildneſs and dexterity, to do it, ſo as not to exaſperate his ſpirit; for nothing is gained by harſhneſs and violence.

To ſpeak little, which is ſo much recommended by the wiſe men of ancient times, is not to be underſtood in ſuch manner as that we ſhould ſpeak but few words, but that we ſhould not ſpeak many unprofitable words: for in point of ſpeaking, one is not to regard ſo much the quantity, as the quality; and in my opinion we ought to fly both extremes. For to be too reſerved and ſevere, refuſing to contribute to the familiar entertainments uſed in converſation, looks like a want of confidence, or ſome ſort of diſdain; and on the other hand, to be always babbling and prating, ſo as to give neither leiſure nor opportunity to others to ſpeak when they would, ſavours of ſhallowneſs and levity.

St. *Lewis* held it not good to be whiſpering in company, and particularly at table, leſt it ſhould give occaſion to ſuſpicion that ſome evil was ſpoken of others. *He that is at table* (ſaid he) *in good company, and has ſomething to ſay that is merry and pleaſant, ſhould ſpeak it ſo that all the company may hear him: if it be a thing of importance, let him not ſpeak of it at all.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of paſtimes and recreations: And firſt of ſuch as are lawful and commendable.

IT is neceſſary ſometimes to give ſome relaxation to our minds, and to our bodies alſo, by ſome kind of recreation. S. *John* the evangeliſt, as *Caſſian* ſays, was one day found by a huntſman with a partridge on his fiſt, which he made much of by way of recreation: the huntſman aſked him, why he, being ſuch a man as he was, would paſs his time in a thing ſo low and mean: and S. *John* ſaid to him; Why doſt thou not carry thy bow always bent? The huntſman anſwered, becauſe if it ſhould be always bent, I ſhould fear leſt it might loſe its force, and become uſeleſs. Wonder not then, ſaid the Apoſtle, if I ſometimes remit a little of the cloſe application and attention of my ſpirit, to take ſome ſmall recreation, that I may afterwards employ myſelf more fervently in divine contemplation. It is doubtleſs a vice to be ſo rigorous, rude and ſavage, as neither to be willing to take one's ſelf, nor to allow to others, any manner of recreation.

To take the air, to walk, to entertain one's ſelf with chearful and friendly converſations, to play on the lute or any other inſtrument, to ſing in muſick, to go a hunting, are recreations ſo innocent, that to uſe them well there needs but that common prudence, which gives to every thing its due order, time, place, and meaſure.

Thoſe games, in which the gain ſerves as a reward and recompence for the dexterity and induſtry of the body or of the mind; as tennis, ball, pallmall, running at the ring, cheſs, and tables, are recreations in themſelves good and lawful; only all exceſs is to be avoided, either in the time employed in them, or in the ſum that is played for; becauſe if too much

time

time be ſpent in them, they are no longer a recreation, but an occupation, and neither the mind nor the body are refreſhed, but on the contrary are ſtupified and oppreſſed. After playing five or ſix hours at cheſs, the ſpirits are altogether fatigued and exhauſted. To play long at tennis, is not to recreate the body, but to oppreſs it. And if the ſum which is played for be too great, the affections of the players become irregular: and beſides, it is an unjuſt thing to hazard ſo much upon abilities and induſtries which are of ſo little importance, and ſo unprofitable, as thoſe, which are exerciſed at play: but above all, *Philothea*, take heed that you ſet not your affection on any of theſe things; for how innocent ſoever any recreation may be, it is a vice to ſet the heart and affection upon it: I do not ſay, that you muſt take no pleaſure in your play, whilſt you are at it, for then it would be no recreation; but I ſay, you muſt not ſet your affection on it, to long for it, to amuſe yourſelf about it, and to be eager after it.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of prohibited games.

THE games of dice, cards, and the like, in which the gain depends principally on hazard, are not only dangerous recreations, as dances are, but plainly and naturally evil and reprehenſible: wherefore they have been forbidden by the laws, as well civil as eccleſiaſtical. But you will ſay, what great harm is there in them? Why the gain is not acquired in theſe games according to reaſon, but according to chance, which falls often upon him, who by ability or induſtry deſerved nothing at all; now reaſon is offended in ſuch a proceeding. But you will ſay, 'tis what we have agreed to. That ſerves indeed to ſhew, that he that wins does no wrong to the loſers; but it warrants neither the agreement, nor the game from being

being unreaſonable: for the gain, which ought to be the reward of induſtry, is made the reward of chance, which deſerves no reward at all, ſince it no way depends upon us: beſides, theſe games bear the name of recreations, and are made to that end; and yet they are by no means recreations, but weariſome occupations. For is it not occupation to keep the mind bent and wound up to the height by a continual attention, and vexed with perpetual uneaſineſſes, apprehenſions, and ſolicitude? Is there any attention more painful, more gloomy and melancholic than that of gameſters? and therefore you muſt not ſpeak when they are at play, you muſt not laugh, nor cough, for fear of giving offence. In fine, there is no joy at play but when you win; and is not this joy iniquitous, ſince it cannot be had but by the loſs and diſpleaſure of one's companion? Surely ſuch ſatisfaction is infamous. For theſe three reaſons this gaming is prohibited.

The great king S. *Lewis*, hearing that the count of *Anjou* his brother, and monſieur *Gautier de Nemours*, were gaming, aroſe ſick as he was out of his bed, and went ſtaggering to their chamber, and taking the tables, the dice, and part of the money, caſt them out at the window into the ſea, and was very angry at them. The holy and chaſte damſel *Sara*, ſpeaking in prayer to God, brings this argument of her innocency: Tob. iii. *Thou knoweſt, O Lord, that I have never joined myſelf with players.*

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of balls, and paſtimes, which are lawful but dangerous.

DANCES and balls in their own nature are things indifferent; but according to the ordinary way that this exerciſe is uſed, it very much bends and inclines to the ſide of evil, and conſequently is full of peril and danger. They are uſed by

by night; now amidſt darkneſs and obſcurity, it is eaſy to let ſeveral dark and vicious accidents ſlide in where the ſubject is of itſelf ſo ſuſceptible of evil. They ſit up long at their paſtimes, and afterwards loſe the mornings of the following days, and by conſequence the means of ſerving God: In a word, it is always folly to exchange the day for the night, light for darkneſs, and good works for fooleries. Every one ſtrives who ſhall carry to the ball moſt vanity; and vanity is ſo great a diſpoſition to evil affections, and to dangerous and reprehenſible loves, that all this is eaſily engendered in dancing.

I ſay to you of dances, *Philothea*, as phyſicians ſay of *muſkrooms*; the beſt of them are good for nothing, ſay they: and I tell you, the beſt of balls are good for nothing. If nevertheleſs you muſt eat *muſhrooms*, be ſure they be well dreſt: If by ſome occaſion, which you cannot well put off, you muſt go to a ball, ſee that your dancing be properly accommodated: But how muſt it be well accommodated? With modeſty, dignity, and a good intention. Eat but little and ſeldom of *muſhrooms*, ſay the phyſicians, for be they never ſo well dreſt, the quantity makes them poiſonous: dance but little, and very ſeldom, *Philothea*, for doing otherwiſe, you put yourſelf in danger of taking an affection to it.

Muſhrooms, according to *Pliny*, being ſpongy and porous, eaſily draw to themſelves infection from the things that are about them: ſo that being near ſerpents and toads, they receive their poiſon: balls, dances, and other night-meetings, ordinarily attract the reigning vices and ſins into one place, quarrels, envies, ſcoffings, and wanton loves: and as theſe exerciſes open the pores of the body of them that uſe them, ſo they alſo open the pores of the heart: by means of which, if any ſerpent taking the advantage, breathe into the ear ſome looſe words or laſcivious ſuggeſtions, or if ſome *baſiliſk* caſt ſome impure look, or wanton glance of love, the heart thus opened is eaſily ſeized upon

upon and poiſoned. O *Philothea*, theſe idle recreations are ordinarily dangerous; they drive away the ſpirit of devotion, they leave the ſoul languiſhing, they cool charity, and excite in the ſoul a thouſand ſorts of evil affections; and therefore they are not to be uſed but with great diſcretion.

But above all, they ſay, that after *muſhrooms* we muſt drink good wine: and I ſay, that after dancing it is neceſſary to uſe ſome good and holy conſiderations, to hinder thoſe dangerous impreſſions, which the vain pleaſure taken in dancing, may have left in our mind. But what conſiderations?

1. That during the time that you were at the ball, many ſouls were burning in hell-fire for the ſins they had committed in dancing, or by occaſion of their dances. 2. That many religious, and perſons of devotion, were at that very time in the preſence of God ſinging his praiſes, and contemplating his beauty: O! how much more happily was their time employed than your's! 3. That whilſt you were dancing, many ſouls departed out of this world in great anguiſh, and thouſands of thouſands of men and women ſuffered great pains in their beds, in hoſpitals, in the ſtreets, by the gout, the ſtone or burning fevers: alas! they had no reſt, and will you have no compaſſion for them? and do not you think, that one day you ſhall groan, as they did, whilſt others ſhall dance as you did? 4. That our Saviour, our Lady, the Angels and Saints beheld you at the ball: ah! how much did they pity you, ſeeing your heart pleaſed with ſo vain an amuſement, and taken up with ſuch childiſh toys! 5. Alas! whilſt you were there, time was paſſing away, and death was drawing nearer; ſee how he mocks you, and calls you to his dance, in which the groans of your friends ſhall ſerve for the muſick, and where you ſhall make but one ſtep from life to death. This dance is the true paſtime of mortals, ſince by it we paſs in a moment from time to an

eternity

eternity either of joys or pains. I have ſet you down theſe little conſiderations: God will ſuggeſt to you many more to the like effect, if you have the fear of him.

CHAP. XXXIV.

At what times we may play or dance.

THAT playing and dancing may be lawful, we muſt uſe them by way of recreation, not by way of affection; for a ſhort time, and not till we are wearied or ſtupified with them; and we muſt uſe them but ſeldom, for otherwiſe we ſhall turn a recreation into an occupation. But on what occaſions may we play and dance? Juſt occaſions of dances, and of innocent games, are more frequent; thoſe of games of hazard more rare; and ſuch games alſo are much more blameable and dangerous. But in one word, dance and play, according to the conditions I have ſet down for you, when, to condeſcend and comply with civil company of innocent converſation, in which you are engaged, prudence and diſcretion ſhall direct you to do it. For condeſcenſion as a branch of charity, makes indifferent things good, and dangerous allowable. It even takes away the harm from thoſe things that are in ſome ſort evil; and therefore games of hazard, which otherwiſe would be reprehenſible, are not ſo, if we uſe them ſometimes by a juſt condeſcenſion.

I was pleaſed to read in the Life of S. *Charles Boromeus*, that he condeſcended with the *Suiſſers* in certain things in which otherwiſe he was very ſtrict; and that St. *Ignatius* of *Loyala*, being invited to play, refuſed it not: as to S. *Elizabeth* of *Hungary* ſhe played and danced ſometimes, when ſhe was preſent at aſſemblies of recreation, without any prejudice to her devotion, which was ſo deeply rooted in her ſoul, that

that as the rocks about the lake of *Rietta* grow greater by the beating of the waves, ſo her devotion increaſed among the pomps and vanities to which her condition expoſed her. Great fires encreaſe by the wind; but little ones are ſoon blown out, if we carry them not covered.

CHAP. XXXV.

That we muſt be faithful, both in great and ſmall occaſions.

THE ſacred Spouſe in the *Canticles*, Cantic. iv. 9. ſays, that his Spouſe had wounded *his heart with one of her eyes, and one of the hairs of her neck.* Now among all the exteriour parts of the human body, none is more noble, either for the workmanſhip, or for the activity, than the eye, and none more mean than the hair. Wherefore the divine Spouſe would give us to underſtand, that he is pleaſed to accept not only the great works of devout perſons, but alſo the leaſt and the meaneſt; and that to ſerve him according to his liking, we muſt take great care to ſerve him well, in great and high things, and in things that are little and low: ſince we may equally by the one and the other wound his heart by love.

Prepare yourſelf then, *Philothea*, to ſuffer many great afflictions for our Lord, even martyrdom itſelf: reſolve to give him all that is moſt dear to you, when it ſhall pleaſe him to take it, father, mother, huſband, wife, brother, ſiſter, children, yea even your eyes, and your life; for to all this you ought to prepare your heart. But as long as the divine providence ſends you not afflictions ſo ſenſible and ſo great, and requires not your eyes of you, give him at leaſt your hair. I mean, ſuffer meekly the ſmall injuries, the little inconveniences, and inconſiderable loſſes, which daily befal you: for by the means of ſuch little occaſions as theſe, managed with love and affection,

you

you ſhall gain his heart intirely, and make it all your own. Theſe little daily charities, this head-ach, this tooth-ach, this cold, this humour of a huſband or wife, this breaking of a glaſs, this contempt, or this ſcorn, this loſs of a pair of gloves, of a ring, of a handkerchief, this little inconvenience one puts one's ſelf to in going ſoon to bed, and riſing early to pray, to communicate, this little ſhame-facedneſs we have in doing certain acts of devotion in publick, in ſhort, all theſe little ſufferings, being accepted, and embraced with love, are highly pleaſing to the divine goodneſs; which for one only glaſs of water has promiſed a ſea of felicity to his faithful ſervants. And becauſe theſe occaſions offer themſelves every moment, the well managing of them will be a great means to heap up much ſpiritual riches.

When I ſaw in the life of S. *Catharine* of *Sienna* ſo many raptures and elevations of ſpirit, ſo many words of wiſdom, and even ſermons uttered by her, I doubted not, but that with this eye of contemplation ſhe had raviſhed the heart of her heavenly Spouſe. But I was no leſs comforted when I found her in her father's kitchen humbly turning the ſpit, blowing the fire, dreſſing the meat, kneading the bread, and doing the meaneſt offices of the houſe, with a courage full of love and affection towards her God: and I eſteem no leſs the little and humble meditation ſhe made amongſt theſe mean and abject employments, than the extaſies and raptures ſhe ſo often had, which it may be were given her only in recompence of this humility and abjection. Now this was her meditation. When ſhe was dreſſing meat for her father, ſhe imagined that ſhe was dreſſing it for our Saviour, like another S. *Martha*; and that her mother held the place of our bleſſed Lady, and her brothers that of the Apoſtles; in this manner exciting herſelf to ſerve in ſpirit all the heavenly court, and employing herſelf with great delight in theſe low ſervices; becauſe ſhe knew ſuch was the will of God. I have brought this example

ample, *Philothea*, that you may know of what importance it is rightly to direct all our actions, be they ever ſo mean, to the ſervice of his divine majeſty.

Wherefore I earneſtly counſel you to imitate that valiant woman, whom the great king *Solomon* ſo highly commends: *ſhe put out her hand* (as he ſays) *to ſtrong things* (that is, to high, generous and important things) and yet diſdained not to *take hold of the ſpindle*. Prov. xxxi. Put out your hand to ſtrong things, exerciſing yourſelf in prayer and meditation, in frequenting the ſacraments, in exciting ſouls to the love of God, in infuſing good inſpirations into hearts, and in a word, in doing great and important works, according to your vocation: but withal forget not your diſtaff and your ſpindle, that is to ſay, take care to practiſe theſe low and humble virtues, which grow like flowers at the foot of the croſs; ſuch as ſerving the poor, viſiting the ſick, taking care of your family, with the works depending upon this; and that profitable diligence, which will not ſuffer you to be idle: and among all theſe things, mingle ſome ſuch conſiderations as thoſe I have related above of S. *Catharine*.

Great occaſions of ſerving God preſent themſelves but ſeldom, but little ones are ordinary: *Now he that ſhall be faithful in ſmall matters* (ſays our Saviour) *ſhall be ſet over great things*. Do all things then in the name of God, and all things will be well done: whether you eat, or drink, or ſleep, or recreate yourſelf, or turn the ſpit, ſo you know how to manage your buſineſs well, you will profit much in the ſight of God, doing all theſe things becauſe God will have you to do them.

CHAP XXXVI.

That we muſt keep our mind juſt and reaſonable.

WE are not men but by our reaſon; and yet it is a rare thing to find men truly reaſonable; becauſe ſelf-love ordinarily puts us out of the paths of reaſon, leading us inſenſibly to a thouſand kinds of ſmall yet dangerous injuſtices and partialities; which, like the little foxes ſpoken of in the *Canticles*, deſtroy the vines; for becauſe they are little, we take no notice of them, and becauſe they are in great number, they fail not to hurt us very much.

Theſe things of which I am going to ſpeak, are they not unjuſt and unreaſonable? We accuſe every little thing in our neighbours, and we excuſe ourſelves in things that are great; we want to ſell very dear, and to buy very cheap; we deſire that juſtice ſhould be executed in another man's houſe, but mercy and connivance in our own; we would have our words taken in good part, but we are delicate and touchy with regard to thoſe of others; we would have our neighbour leave us his goods, taking our money, but is it not more reaſonable that he ſhould keep his goods, and leave us our money? We take it ill that he will not accommodate us; but has he not more reaſon to take it ill that we ſhould deſire to incommode him?

If we affect one exerciſe, we deſpiſe all others, and ſet ourſelves againſt every thing that is not to our own taſte. If there be any of our inferiors, who has not a good grace, or whom we have once taken a diſlike to, do what he will, we take it in ill part, we ceaſe not to mortify him, and to find fault with all he does. On the contrary, if any one be agreeable to us by a behaviour pleaſing our ſenſes, he can do nothing but we will excuſe it. There are ſome virtuous children, whom their parents can ſcarce abide

to

to ſee, becauſe of ſome bodily imperfections; and there are others that are vicious, who are favourites, for ſome corporal gracefulneſs. In all occaſions we prefer the rich before the poor, altho' they be neither of better condition, nor ſo virtuous; nay, we prefer them that are beſt clad. We deſire to have our own dues exactly, but that others ſhould be gentle in demanding theirs: we keep our own rank very preciſely, but would have others humble and condeſcending: we complain eaſily of our neighbour, but none muſt complain of us: what we do for others always ſeems to us very much, but what others do for us ſeems to us nothing. In a word, we are like the partridges in *Paphlagonia*, which have two hearts; for we have one heart mild, favourable and courteous towards ourſelves, and another heart hard, ſevere, and rigorous towards our neighbour. We have two balances, one to weigh our own conveniences with all poſſible advantage, the other to weigh thoſe of our neighbours with as much diſadvantage as we can. The Scripture ſays, Pſ. xi. 3. *Deceitful lips have ſpoken with a double heart*; which is as much as to ſay, that they have two hearts: and to have two weights, the one greater, with which we receive, and the other leſs, with which we deliver out, is an abominable thing in the ſight of God. *Deuteron.* xxv. 13.

Philothea, be equal and juſt in your actions: put yourſelf always in your neighbour's place, and put him in your's, and ſo ſhall you judge well. Make yourſelf the ſeller in buying, and the buyer in ſelling, and you ſhall ſell and buy juſtly. All theſe injuſtices are ſmall, becauſe they oblige not to reſtitution, in as much as we exceed not the limits of rigour, in inſiſting upon what is for our advantage; but certainly they oblige us to amend them, for they are great defects againſt reaſon and charity; and when all is done, they are but mere illuſions. For a man loſes nothing by comporting himſelf generouſly, nobly, and courteouſly, and with a free, equal and rea-

ſonable heart. Forget not then, *Philothea*, often to examine your heart, if it be ſuch with regard to your neighbour, as you would have his to be in your regard, if you were in his place; for this is the touch-ſtone of true reaſon. *Trajan*, being blamed by his confidents for making the imperial majeſty as they thought too acceſſible, ſaid, *Ought not I then be ſuch an emperor towards private men, as I would deſire an emperor to be towards me, if I were a private man?*

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of deſires.

EVERY one knows that we ought to refrain from the deſires of vicious things; for the deſire of evil makes us evil: but I tell you moreover, *Philothea*, not to deſire thoſe things which are dangerous to the ſoul, as balls, plays, and other ſuch like paſtimes are; nor to deſire honours and offices, nor yet viſions and extaſies: for there is a great deal of danger, of vanity and deceit in ſuch things. Deſire not things which are a great way off, that is, ſuch as cannot happen in a long time, as many do, who by this means weary and diſtract their hearts unprofitably, and put themſelves in danger of great diſquiet. If a young man deſires earneſtly to be provided with ſome office before the time is come, to what purpoſe I pray ſerves this deſire? If a married woman deſires to be a nun, to what purpoſe? If I deſire to buy my neighbour's goods, before he is willing to ſell them, is it not loſing my time to entertain this deſire? If being ſick I deſire to preach, or to celebrate the holy maſs, to viſit others that are ſick, and to perform the exerciſes of thoſe who are in health, are not all theſe deſires vain, ſince it is not then in my power to put them in execution? And in the mean time theſe unprofitable deſires fill up the place

place of others which I ſhould have, of being very patient, well reſigned, well mortified, very obedient, and very meek under my ſufferings, which is what God would have me practiſe at that time: but we have often the longings of women with child, who deſire cherries in autumn, and grapes in the ſpring.

I can no way approve that perſons engaged in any duty or vocation, ſhould amuſe themſelves to deſire any other kind of life, than that which agrees with their duty; or any ſuch exerciſes as are incompatible with their preſent condition; for this diſſipates the heart, and makes it unfit for neceſſary exerciſes. If I deſire the ſolitude of the *Carthuſians*, I loſe my time; and this deſire takes up the place of that which I ought to have to employ myſelf well in my preſent office: no, I would not even that any one ſhould deſire to have a better wit or better judgment than he has: for theſe deſires are to no purpoſe, and take up the place of the deſire that every one ought to have, of cultivating that which he has, ſuch as it is: nor would I that any one ſhould deſire thoſe means to ſerve God, which he has not, but that he ſhould faithfully employ thoſe he has. Now this is to be underſtood of deſires, which take up the heart; for as for ſimple wiſhes, if they be not too equent, they do no harm at all.

Deſire not croſſes, but in proportion to the patience with which you have ſupported thoſe which have been already ſent you: for it is an abuſe to deſire martyrdom, and not to have the courage to bear an injury. The enemy often ſuggeſts to us great deſires of things that are abſent, and which ſhall never come to paſs, that ſo he may divert our mind from preſent objects, in which how little ſoever they may be, we might gain much profit to ourſelves. We fight with the monſters of *Africa* in imagination; and in the mean time, for want of attention, we ſuffer ourſelves in effect to be killed by the little ſerpents

that lie in our way. Desire not temptations, for that would be rashness: but employ your heart to expect them courageously, and to defend yourself against them, when they shall come.

Variety of meats (especially if the quantity be great) always overcharges the stomach, and if it be weak, destroys it: overcharge not your soul with a multitude of desires; neither with such as are worldly, for those will quite ruin you; nor even with such as are spiritual, for these will distract you. When the soul is well purged, finding herself freed from bad humours she has a very great appetite for spiritual things, and, as one famished, she sets herself upon desiring a thousand sorts of exercises of piety, of mortification, of penance, of humility, of charity, and of prayer. My *Philothea*, it is a good sign to have so good an appetite: but you must consider whether you can well digest all that you have a mind to eat. Choose then, by the advice of your ghostly father, amongst so many desires, those which may be practised, and put in execution at present, and make the best profit you can of them; that done, God will send you others, which you shall also practise in their proper season, and thus you shall not lose your time in unprofitable desires. My meaning is not that we should lose any sort of good desires: but that we should bring them forth in order; and that those which cannot presently be effected, should be locked up in some corner of the heart, till their time come, and in the mean while that we should practise those which are already ripe and in season. This I speak not only for spiritual persons, but also for those of the world; for without this there would be no living, without uneasiness and hurry.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Inſtructions for married people.

MATRIMONY *is a great Sacrament, I ſay, in Jeſus Chriſt and in his Church.* Eph. v. 32. *It is honourable* to all, in all, *and* through all; that is, in all its parts: *to all*, becauſe even they that are virgins ought to honour it with humility; *in all*, becauſe it is equally holy in the rich and in the poor; *through all*, becauſe its origin, its end, its advantages, its form and its matter, are all holy. It is the nurſery of Chriſtianity, which peoples the earth with faithful ſouls, to fill up the number of the elect in heaven; ſo that the conſervation of the good of marriage is of extreme importance to the commonwealth, for 'tis the root, and the ſource of all its ſtreams.

Would to God that his moſt beloved Son were invited to all marriages, as he was to the marriage in *Cana*; then the wine of conſolations and benedictions would never be wanting there. For the reaſon why commonly there is but a little only of that wine at the beginning, is becauſe *Adonis* is invited inſtead of our Lord, and *Venus* inſtead of our Lady. He that would have his lambs fair and mottled, as *Jacob*'s were, muſt like him ſet fair rods of divers colours before the ſheep when they meet to couple; and he that would have a happy ſucceſs in marriage, ought in his eſpouſals to repreſent to himſelf the ſanctity and dignity of this Sacrament. But alas! inſtead of this, there are a thouſand diſorders committed in paſtimes, feaſting, and immodeſt diſcourſe: it is no wonder then, if the ſucceſs of the marriage be anſwerable. Above all things, I exhort married people to that mutual love, which the Holy Ghoſt ſo much recommends in the ſcripture. O you that are married, it is nothing to tell you to love one another with a natural

tural love, for turtles do as much as that; nor to ſay, love one another with a human love, for the heathens have practiſed well that kind of love: but I ſay to you after the great Apoſtle, *Huſbands love your wives, as Chriſt hath loved his Church.* Eph. v. *and you wives love your huſbands, as the Church loveth her Saviour.* It was God that brought *Eve* to our firſt father *Adam*, and gave her him to wife; it is alſo God, O my friends, who, with his invisible hand, has tied the knot of the holy bond of your marriage, and has given you to one another: why do you not then cheriſh one another with a love all holy, ſacred and divine?

The firſt effect of this love is an indiſſoluble union of your hearts. Two pieces of fir glued together, if the glue be good, cleave ſo faſt one to the other, that you may ſooner break the pieces in any other place than where they were joined. But God joins the huſband to the wife with his own blood; for which cauſe this union is ſo ſtrong, that the ſoul muſt ſooner part from the body of the one or of the other, than the huſband from the wife. Now this union is not underſtood principally of the body, but of the heart, of the affection, and of the love.

The ſecond effect of this love ought to be the inviolable fidelity of the one to the other. Seals were anciently graven upon rings, which were worn on the fingers, as the holy ſcripture itſelf teſtifies. See here then the myſtery of the ceremony uſed in marriage. The Church by the hand of the prieſt bleſſes a ring, and giving it firſt to the man, teſtifies, that ſhe puts a ſeal upon his heart by this ſacrament, to the end, that henceforward neither the name nor the love of any other woman may enter in there, ſo long as ſhe ſhall live, who has been given to him: afterward the bridegroom puts the ring on the hand of the bride, that ſhe reciprocally may underſtand, that her heart muſt never admit an affection to any other man, ſo long as he ſhall live upon earth, whom our Lord here gives to her.

The

The third fruit of marriage is the lawful production and education of children. It is a great honour to you that are married, that, God deſigning to multiply ſouls, which may bleſs and praiſe him to all eternity, makes you co-operate with him in ſo worthy a work by the production of the bodies, into which he infuſes like heavenly drops, the ſouls, in creating them; as he creates them, in infuſing them into the bodies.

Conſerve then, you huſbands, a tender, conſtant, and cordial love for your wives; for the woman was taken from that ſide of the firſt man which was neareſt his heart, to the end ſhe ſhould be loved by him cordially and tenderly. The weakneſſes and infirmities of your wives, whether in body or mind, ought not to provoke you to any kind of diſdain, but rather to a ſweet and affectionate compaſſion; ſince God has created them ſuch, to the end that, depending upon you, you ſhould receive from them more honour and reſpect, and that you ſhould have them in ſuch manner for your companions, that nevertheleſs you ſhould be their heads and ſuperiors. And you, O wives, love the huſbands whom God has given you tenderly and cordially, but with a reſpectful love, and full of reverence; for therefore indeed did God create them of a ſex more vigorous and predominant; and was pleaſed to ordain, that the woman ſhould be depending upon the man, bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh, and that ſhe ſhould be made of a rib of his, and taken from under his arm, to ſhew that ſhe ought to be under the hand and guiding of her huſband. And all the holy ſcripture ſtrictly recommends to you this ſubjection; which notwithſtanding the ſame ſcripture renders ſweet to you, not only by taking order that you ſhould accomodate yourſelves to it with love, but by ordaining alſo your huſbands to exerciſe it over you with great charity, tenderneſs, and ſweetneſs: *Huſbands* (ſays S. *Peter*, 1. Pet. iii. 7.) *behave*

yourſelves diſcreetly towards your wives, as the weaker veſſels, giving honour to them.

But while I exhort you to advance more and more in this mutual love, which you owe one another, beware leſt it turn into any ſort of jealouſy: for it often happens, that as the worm is bred in the apple which is the moſt delicate and moſt ripe, ſo jealouſy grows in that love of married people, which is the moſt ardent and preſſing, of which nevertheleſs it ſpoils and corrupts the ſubſtance, breeding, by little and little, ſtrifes, diſſentions and divorces. Surely jealouſy never comes where the friendſhip on both ſides is grounded on true virtue; and therefore where jealouſy comes, it is an infallible mark that the love is in ſome degree ſenſual and groſs, and has light upon a ſubject, where it has met with but an imperfect and inconſtant virtue, and ſubject to diſtruſt. It is then a ſottiſh vaunting of friendſhip to have a mind to exalt it by jealouſy: for jealouſy may well be a ſign of the greatneſs and groſſneſs of the friendſhip, but never of the goodneſs, purity, and perfection of it; ſince the perfection of friendſhip preſuppoſes an aſſurance of the virtue of that which we love, and jealouſy preſuppoſes the uncertainty of it.

If you deſire, O huſbands, that your wives ſhould be faithful to you, give them a leſſon by your example. *With what face* (ſays S. *Gregory Nazianzen*) *can you exact purity of your wives, when you yourſelves live in impurity? How can you require of them that which you give them not? Will you have them chaſte? behave yourſelves chaſtely to them*; (*and* as S. *Paul* ſays) *let every man know how to poſſeſs his own veſſel in holineſs. But if on the contrary you yourſelves teach them to be vicious, 'tis no wonder if you are diſgraced by their perdition. But you, O wives, whoſe honour is inſeparably joined with purity and modeſty, be zealous to preſerve this your glory, and ſuffer no kind of looſe behaviour to tarniſh the whiteneſs of your reputation.* Fear all kind of

of aſſaults, be they ever ſo ſmall; never ſuffer any wanton addreſſes to come near you: whoſoever ſhall offer to praiſe your beauty and your genteel behaviour, ought to be ſuſpected; for he that praiſes the ware which he cannot buy, is uſually ſtrongly tempted to ſteal it: but if to your praiſe any one ſhall add the diſpraiſe of your huſband, he offers you a heinous injury; for it is evident, that he not only has a mind to ruin you, but accounts you already half loſt, ſince the bargain is half made with the ſecond merchant, when one is diſguſted with the firſt.

Ladies formerly, as well as now, were accuſtomed to wear a number of pearls on their ears, for the pleaſure, ſays *Pliny*, of the jingling which they make in touching one another. But for my part, as I know that the great friend of God, *Iſaac*, ſent ear-rings, as the firſt earneſt of his love, to the chaſte *Rebecca*, I believe that this myſterious ornament ſignifies, that the firſt part which a huſband ſhould take poſſeſſion of in his wife, and which his wife ſhould faithfully keep for him, is her ears; to the end that no other language or noiſe ſhould enter there, but only the ſweet and amiable muſick of chaſte and pure words, which are the oriental pearls of the goſpel; for we muſt always remember, that ſouls are poiſoned by the ear, as the body is by the mouth.

Love and fidelity joined together beget always familiarity and confidence; and therefore the Saints have uſed many reciprocal careſſes in their marriage; careſſes truly amorous, but pure, but tender, but ſincere. Thus *Iſaac* and *Rebecca*, the moſt chaſte married couple of ancient times, were ſeen through a window careſſing one another, Gen. xxvi. 8. in ſuch manner as, though there was no immodeſty, *Abimelech* was convinced that they could be no other than man and wife. The great S. *Lewis*, equally rigorous to his own fleſh, and tender in the love of his wife, was almoſt blamed for the abundance of ſuch careſſes,

tho' indeed he rather deſerved praiſe, for being able to bring his martial and courageous ſpirit to ſtoop to theſe little offices requiſite to the conſervation of conjugal love: for although theſe little demonſtrations of pure and free affection bind not the hearts, yet they bring them near to one another, and ſerve for an agreeable diſpoſition to mutual converſation.

St. *Monica*, being with child of the great St. *Auſtin*, dedicated him by frequent oblations to chriſtian religion, and to the ſervice of the glory of God, as he himſelf witneſſes, ſaying, that *he had already taſted the ſalt of God in his mother's womb.* This is a great leſſon for chriſtian women, to offer up to his divine Majeſty the fruits of their wombs, even before they come into the world; for God, who accepts the offerings of an humble and willing heart, commonly ſeconds the good affections of mothers at that time; witneſs *Samuel*, S. *Thomas* of *Aquin*, S *Andrew* of *Fieſola*, and divers others. The mother of S. *Bernard* (a mother worthy of ſuch a ſon) as ſoon as her children were born, took them in her arms, and offered them up to Jeſus Chriſt; and from thenceforth loved them with reſpect, as things conſecrated and intruſted to her by God; which ſucceeded ſo happily to her, that in the end they all ſeven became very holy. But children being come into the world, and beginning to have the uſe of reaſon, both their fathers and mothers ought to have great care to imprint the fear of God in their hearts. The good queen *Blanch* performed this office fervently with regard to the king S. *Lewis* her ſon; ſhe often ſaid to him, *I had much rather, my dear child, ſee you die before my eyes, than ſee you commmit one only mortal ſin:* which remained ſo engraved in the ſoul of this holy child, that, as he himſelf related, not one day of his life paſt, in which he did not remember it, taking all poſſible care to obſerve well this divine doctrine. Families and progenies in our language are called houſes; and even the *Hebrews* called the generations

of

of children, the building up of a houſe; for it is in this ſenſe, it is ſaid, that God built houſes for the midwives of *Egypt*. Now this is to ſhew, that the raiſing of a houſe or family conſiſts not in ſtoring up a quantity of wordly goods, but in the good education of children in the fear of God, and in virtue. In which no pains or labours ought to be ſpared; for children are the crown of their parents. Thus St. *Monica* with ſo much fervour and conſtancy fought againſt the evil inclination of her ſon S. *Auſtin*; that having followed him by ſea and by land, ſhe made him more happily the child of her tears by the converſion of his ſoul, than he had been of her blood, by the generation of his body.

S. *Paul* leaves to wives the care of the houſhold, as their portion: for which reaſon many think with truth that their devotion is more profitable to the family than that of the huſband, who, not reſiding ſo ordinarily among the domeſticks, cannot by conſequence ſo eaſily frame them to virtue. On this conſideration *Solomon*, in his Prov. xxxi. makes the happineſs of the whole houſhold to depend on the care and induſtry of that valiant woman whom he deſcribes.

It is ſaid in *Geneſis*, Gen. xxv. 21. that *Iſaac*, ſeeing his wife *Rebecca* barren, prayed to the Lord for her, or, according to the *Hebrew*, prayed to the Lord over-againſt her, becauſe the one prayed on the one ſide of the oratory, and the other on the other; ſo the prayer of the huſband made in this manner was heard. Such union as this of the huſband and wife, in holy devotion, is the greateſt and moſt fruitful of all: and to this, they ought mutually to encourage, and to draw one another. There are fruits, as for example the quince, which becauſe of the harſhneſs of their juice are not agreeable except they be preſerved with ſugar; there are others, which becauſe of their tenderneſs cannot be long kept, unleſs they be preſerved in like manner,

manner, ſuch as cherries and apricocks; thus wives ought to wiſh that their huſbands ſhould be preſerved with the ſugar of devotion; for a man without devotion is a kind of animal ſevere, harſh, and rough. And huſbands ought to wiſh, that their wives ſhould be devout, becauſe without devotion a woman is very frail, and ſubject to fall from, or to fade in virtue. S. *Paul* ſays, *that the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing huſband*; becauſe in this ſtrict alliance of marriage, the one may eaſily draw the other to virtue: but what a bleſſing is it, when the man and wife being both believers ſanctify one another in the true fear of God.

As to the reſt: the mutual bearing with one another ought to be ſo great, that they ſhould never be both at once angry with one another, nor all on a ſudden, to the end that there ſhould never be a diſſention or debate ſeen between them. *Bees* cannot ſtay in a place where there are echoes or reboundings and redoubling of voices; nor can the Holy Ghoſt remain in a Houſe where there are ſtrifes, contradictions and reboundings of clamours and contentions. S. *Gregory Nazianzen* witneſſes, that in his time married people made a feaſt on the anniverſary day of their wedding. For my part I ſhould approve of the introducing this cuſtom, provided it were not attended with preparations of worldly and ſenſual recreations; but that the huſband and wife ſhould confeſs and communicate on that day, and recommend to God with more than ordinary fervour the happy progreſs of their marriage; renewing their good purpoſes to ſanctify it more and more by mutual love and fidelity, and recovering breath as it were, in our Lord, for the better ſupporting the burthens of their calling.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Of the honeſty of the marriage-bed.

THE marriage-bed ought to be undefiled as the Apoſtle ſays, (Heb. xiii. 4.) that is to ſay, exempt from uncleanneſs, and all profane filthineſs. Holy marriage was firſt inſtituted in the earthly paradiſe, where, as yet, there never had been any diſorder of concupiſcence, or any thing diſhoneſt. There is ſome reſemblance between luſtful pleaſures and thoſe that are taken in eating, for both of them have relation to the fleſh, though the former by reaſon of their brutal vehemence are called ſimply carnal. I will then explain that which I cannot ſpeak of the one, by that which I ſhall ſay of the other.

1. Eating is ordained for our preſervation: ſo then eating merely to nouriſh and preſerve a perſon, is a thing that is good, holy, and commanded; ſo that which is requiſite in marriage for the bringing of children into the world and multiplying people, is a good thing and very holy, for it is the principal end of marriage.

2. To eat, not for the preſervation of life, but to keep up that mutual converſation and condeſcenſion which we owe to one another, is a thing very juſt and honeſt: ſo the mutual and lawful condeſcenſion of the parties joined in holy marriage, is called by S. *Paul* a debt, and ſo great a debt, that he allows not that either of the parties ſhould exempt themſelves from it, without the free and voluntary conſent of the other, no, not even for the exerciſes of devotion; (which made me put down what I ſaid concerning this in the chapter of holy communion) how much leſs then may either party exempt themſelves from this debt for capricious pretences of virtue, or for anger or diſdain.

3. As they that eat for the duty of mutual converſation, ought to eat freely, and not as it were by force,

force, and moreover ſhould endeavour to ſhew an appetite to their meat; ſo the marriage debt ſhould always be paid faithfully, freely, and in the ſame manner as if it were in hope of having children, although on ſome occaſions there might be no ſuch hope.

4. To eat, not for either of the two former reaſons, but merely to content the appetite, may be a thing ſupportable, but yet not commendable; for the mere pleaſure of the ſenſual appetite cannot be an object ſufficient to make an action commendable; it is well if it be ſupportable. To eat not merely for the appetite only, but alſo with exceſs and irregularity, is a thing more or leſs blame-worthy, according as the exceſs is great or little.

5. Now the exceſs in regard to eating conſiſts not only in taking too great a quantity, but alſo in the way and manner of the eating. It is ſtrange (dear *Philothea*) that honey which is ſo proper and ſo wholeſome a food for *bees*, may nevertheleſs be ſo hurtful to them, as ſometimes to make them ſick, as when in the ſpring they eat too much of it, for then it gives them the flux; and ſometimes to kill them without remedy, as when they are overcharged with it in the fore-part of their head and wings. So in truth nuptial commerce, which is ſo holy, ſo juſt, ſo commendable, and ſo profitable to the commonwealth, is nevertheleſs in certain caſes dangerous to them that exerciſe it; for ſometimes it makes their ſoul very ſick with venial ſin, as in caſes of mere and ſimple exceſs, and ſometimes it kills them outright by mortal ſin, as when the order appointed for procreation of children is violated and perverted; in which caſe according as one departs more or leſs from that order, the ſins are more or leſs abominable, but always mortal: for th procreation of children being the firſt and principal end of marriage, one may never lawfully depart from the order which that requires, tho' for ſome other accident it cannot at that time be brought about;

as it happens when barrenneſs, or being already with child, hinders the production and generation. For in theſe occurrences corporal commerce may ſtill be juſt and holy, provided the rules of generation be followed: no accident whatſoever being able to prejudice the law which the principal end of marriage has impoſed. Certainly the infamous and execrable action of *Onan* in his marriage, was deteſtable before God, as the holy text of the 38th chapter of *Geneſis* teſtifies. And although certain hereticks of our days, a hundred times more blameable than the *Cynicks*, (of whom S. *Jerome* ſpeaks upon the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*) have been pleaſed to ſay, it was the perverſe intention only of that wicked man, which diſpleaſed God; the ſcripture poſitively ſays otherwiſe, and aſſures us in particular, that the thing itſelf which he did, was deteſtable and abominable in the ſight of God.

It is a true mark of a baſe, abject, and unworthy ſpirit, to be thinking of one's meats and of one's eatings before the time of the meal; and ſtill more, when after the meal one amuſes one's ſelf with the pleaſure which they took in eating, keeping it up by one's words and thoughts, and wallowing one's mind in the rememberance of the ſenſual ſatisfaction one had in ſwallowing down thoſe morſels; as they do, who before dinner have their mind on the ſpit, and after dinner in diſhes; men worthy to be *ſcullions* of a kitchen, *who make a God*, as S. *Paul* ſays, *of their belly*. Perſons of honour never think of the table, but in ſitting down to it, and after dinner waſh their hands and their mouth, that they may neither keep the taſte nor the ſcent of what they have been eating. The *elephant* is but a groſs beaſt, yet the moſt worthy of any upon earth, and the moſt ſenſible. I will give you a ſpecimen of his chaſtity: he never changes his female, and has a tender love for her which he hath choſen, and yet he never couples with her, but from three years to three years, and that only for the ſpace of five days, and ſo privately, that he is never ſeen in the act

act, but on the ſixth day he makes his appearance, and then the firſt thing he does, is to go directly to ſome river, where he waſhes all his body entirely, not being willing by any means to return to the herd till he be firſt purified. Are not theſe good and modeſt diſpoſitions in ſuch an animal? by which he invites married people not to keep their affections engaged in thoſe ſenſual and carnal pleaſures, which according to their vocation they have exerciſed; but when they are paſt, to waſh their heart and affection from them, and purify themſelves as ſoon as they can, that afterwards with all freedom of mind they may practiſe other actions more pure and elevated. In this advice conſiſts the perfect practice of that excellent doctrine of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians:* (1 Cor. vii. 29.) *The time is ſhort* (ſaid he) *it remains that they who have wives, be as if they had none.* For according to S. *Gregory*, that man has a wife as if he had none, who takes in ſuch manner corporal ſatisfaction with her, as not to be diverted by it from ſpiritual exerciſes. Now what is ſaid of the huſband is underſtood reciprocally of the wife: *Let thoſe that uſe the world* (ſays the ſame Apoſtle) *be as though they uſed it not.* Let every one then uſe this world according to his calling, but in ſuch manner, that not engaging his affection in it, he may be as free and ready to ſerve God, as if he uſed it not at all. It is the great evil of man (ſays S. *Auſtin*) to deſire to uſe the things which he ſhould only enjoy: we ſhould enjoy ſpiritual things, and only uſe corporal things; of which, when the uſe is turned into enjoying, our reaſonable ſoul is alſo turned into a brutiſh and beaſtly ſoul. I think I have ſaid all that I would ſay, and made myſelf underſtood, without ſaying that which I would not ſay.

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

Inſtructions for widows.

SAINT *Paul* inſtructs all prelates in the perſon of his *Timothy*, ſaying; *Honour widows which are widows indeed.* 1 Tim. v. 3. Now to be a widow indeed theſe things are required.

1. That the widow be not only a widow in body, but alſo in heart; that is, that ſhe be reſolved with an inviolable reſolution to keep herſelf in the ſtate of a chaſte widowhood: for thoſe that are only widows till an opportunity preſent itſelf of being married again, are only ſeparate from men, as to the pleaſures of the body; but are already joined to them according to the will of the heart. And if ſhe that is a widow indeed, in order to confirm herſelf in the ſtate of widowhood, will alſo offer to God her body and her chaſtity by vow, ſhe ſhall add a great ornament to her widowhood, and give a great ſecurity to her reſolution: for ſeeing that, after her vow, it is no longer in her power to quit her chaſtity without giving up her title to heaven, ſhe will be ſo jealous of her deſign, that ſhe will not ſuffer ſo much as the leaſt thought of marriage to ſtay in her heart one ſingle moment: ſo that this ſacred vow will put a ſtrong barrier between her ſoul and all manner of projects contrary to her reſolution. To be ſure St. *Auſtin* adviſes this vow very ſtrongly to the chriſtian widow; and the ancient and learned *Origen* goes much farther, for he exhorts married women to vow and dedicate themſelves to a chaſte widowhood, in caſe their huſbands ſhould die before them; to the end that, amidſt the ſenſual pleaſures, which they may have in their marriage, they may alſo enjoy the merit of a chaſte widowhood, by means of this anticipated promiſe. A vow makes the good works done in conſequence of it more acceptable to God, increaſes the

courage

courage to put them in execution, and gives to God not only the good works, which are the fruits of our good-will, but dedicates likewiſe to him the will itſelf, which is as the tree of all our actions. By ſimple chaſtity we lend as it were our body to God, retaining notwithſtanding a liberty to ſubject it another day to ſenſual pleaſures; but by the vow of chaſtity, we make him an abſolute and irrevocable gift of our body, without reſerving to ourſelves any power of recalling it, and thus happily render ourſelves bond-ſlaves to him, whoſe bondage is better than any kingdom. Now as I highly approve the advice of thoſe two great perſons, ſo I ſhould wiſh that thoſe ſouls, which are ſo happy as to deſire to follow it, ſhould do it prudently, holily and ſolidly, having firſt well examined their reſolutions, invoked the light and grace of heaven, and taking the counſel of ſome wiſe and devout director; for ſo all will be done with more fruit.

2. Moreover this renouncing of ſecond marriage muſt be done purely and ſimply, to the only end of turning with more purity all the affections of the ſoul to God, and joining the heart on every ſide with that of his divine Majeſty: for if the deſire to leave her children rich, or any other worldly pretenſion ſhould keep the widow in her ſtate of widowhood, ſhe may perhaps have praiſe for it, but certainly not before God: for in the eyes of God nothing can truly merit praiſe, but what is done for God.

3. Moreover the widow, that would be a widow indeed, muſt be voluntarily ſeparated and reſtrained from profane ſatisfactions. *For ſhe that liveth in pleaſures, is dead while ſhe is living*, ſays S. *Paul*. (1 Tim. v. 6.) To deſire to be a widow, and to be pleaſed nevertheleſs with being courted, flattered and careſſed; to love to be at balls, at dances and at feaſts; to be perfumed, to be finely dreſſed out, and the like; is to be a widow living as to the body, but dead as to the

ſoul.

ſoul. What imports it I pray you whether the ſign of the inn of *Adonis*, and of profane love, be made up with white feathers, in the faſhion of a plume, or with black *cypreſs*, ſpread like a net round about the face? Yea, the black is often put to the advantage of vanity, over the white, to make it more remarkable. For the widow having made a trial of that faſhion by which women can pleaſe men beſt, caſts the more dangerous baits before their minds. The widow then which lives in theſe fond delights, is dead while ſhe is living, and ſpeaking properly is but an idol of widowhood.

The time of pruning is come, the voice of the turtle hath been heard in our land, ſays the *Canticle*. All that will live godly, muſt prune and cut away all worldly ſuperfluities. But this is more particularly neceſſary for the true widow, who like a chaſte turtle, comes freſh from weeping, bewailing and lamenting the loſs of her huſband. When *Noemi* returned from *Moab* to *Bethlehem*, the women of the town, who had known her when ſhe was firſt married, ſaid one to another, Is not this that *Noemi?* Ruth i. 20. But ſhe anſwered, Call me not *Noemi*, I pray you, (for *Noemi* ſignifies comely and beautiful,) but call me *Mara*, for the Lord has filled my ſoul with bitterneſs; which ſhe ſaid foraſmuch as ſhe had loſt her huſband. Even ſo the devout widow never deſires to be called or eſteemed either beautiful or comely, contenting herſelf with being ſuch as God will have her to be, that is to ſay, humble and abject in her own eyes.

Lamps that are fed with aromatick oil caſt a more ſweet ſmell when their flame is put out: ſo widows whoſe love has been pure in their marriage, ſend forth a more ſweet perfume of virtue and chaſtity, when their light, that is, their huſband is extinguiſhed by death. To love the huſband as long as he is alive, is an ordinary thing amongſt women; but to love him ſo well, as that after his death one will hear of no other,

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is a degree of love which appertains only to them that are widows indeed. To hope in God, whilſt the huſband ſerves for a ſupport, is a thing not ſo rare; but to hope in God, when one is deſtitute of this ſupport, is a thing worthy of great praiſe. Wherefore it is more eaſy to know, in widowhood, the perfection of the virtues which a woman had in the time of her marriage.

The widow that has children, who have need of her addreſs and conduct, and principally in what relates to their ſouls, and the eſtabliſhment of their life, neither can nor ought by any means to abandon them; for the Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſays clearly, that they are obliged to that care of their children, to make the like return to their parents, 1 Tim. iii. and that if any have not a care of thoſe that belong to them, and eſpecially of thoſe of their own family, they are worſe than infidels. But if the children be in a ſtate that they have no need of her guiding, then ſhould the widow gather together all her affections and thoughts, to apply them more purely to her own advancement in the love of God.

If ſome abſolute neceſſity oblige not the conſcience of the true widow to external troubles, ſuch as ſuits in law; I counſel her to avoid them altogether, and to follow that method in managing her affairs, which ſhall be moſt peaceable, and quiet, altho' it may not ſeem to be the moſt advantageous. For the advantages to be reaped from worldly troubles muſt be very great, to bear any compariſon with the happineſs of a holy tranquillity; beſides, that wranglings and lawſuits diſtract the heart, and often open a gate to the enemies of chaſtity, while to pleaſe them, whoſe favour they ſtand in need of, they are put upon ſuch behaviour, as is neither ſuitable to devotion, nor pleaſing to God.

Let prayer be the widow's continual exerciſe; for ſeeing ſhe ought now to have no other love but for God,

God, ſhe ought by the ſame rule to have ſcarce any other words but for God. And as the iron which by the preſence of the diamond is hindered from following the attraction of the load-ſtone, ſprings towards it as ſoon as the diamond is removed: ſo the heart of the widow, which could not well give itſelf up ſo entirely to God, nor follow the attractions of his divine love, during the life of her huſband, ought immediately after his death to run ardently after the ſweet odour of the heavenly perfumes, as if ſhe ſaid, in imitation of the ſacred Spouſe; O Lord, now that I am all my own, receive me that I may be all thine; *Draw me after thee, we will run after the odour of thy ointments,*

The exerciſe of virtues proper for a holy widow, are perfect modeſty, renouncing of honours, of ranks, of aſſemblies, of titles, and of all ſuch vanities; ſerving the poor and the ſick, comforting the afflicted, inſtructing girls in a devout life, and making themſelves a perfect pattern of all virtues to young women: cleanlineſs and plainneſs ſhould be the two ornaments of their dreſs; humility and charity the two ornaments of their actions; courteſy and mildneſs the two ornaments of their ſpeech; modeſty and purity the ornaments of their eyes; and *Jeſus Chriſt* crucified the only love of their heart. In fine, the true widow is in the church a little violet of *March*, which ſends forth an incomparable ſweetneſs by the odour of her devotion, and almoſt always keeps herſelf hidden under the large leaves of her abjection; and by her rather dark than bright colour teſtifies her mortification: ſhe grows in cool and uncultivated places, not willing to be importuned with the converſation of worldlings, the better to preſerve the coolneſs of her heart againſt all the heats, which the deſire of riches, of honours, or even of fond loves, might bring upon her. *She ſhall be bleſſed* (ſays the holy Apoſtle) *if ſhe continue in this manner.* 1 Cor. vii. 8.

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I ſhould have a great many other things to ſay upon this ſubject; but I ſhall have ſaid all in adviſing the widow, who is tender of the honour of her condition, to read attentively the excellent epiſtles which the great St. *Jerome* has written to *Furia*, to *Salvia*, and to all thoſe other ladies, who were ſo happy as to be the ghoſtly children of ſo great a father: for nothing can be added to that which he ſays to them, but only this admonition; that the true widow ought never to blame nor cenſure thoſe, who paſs to the ſecond, or even to the third or fourth marriages; for in ſome caſes God ſo diſpoſes of them for his greater glory: and that ſhe muſt always have before her eyes this doctrine of the ancients; that neither widowhood nor virginity have any other place or rank in heaven, but that which is aſſigned them by humility.

CHAP. XLI.

A word to virgins.

O Virgins, I have only theſe three words to ſay to you: for the reſt you will find elſewhere. If you pretend to a temporal marriage, be careful to keep your firſt love for your firſt huſband. In my opinion it is a great deceit to preſent, inſtead of an entire and ſincere heart, a heart quite worn away, ſpoiled and tired out in love. But if your happineſs calls you to the pure and virginal eſpouſals of Chriſt, and that you deſire to preſerve for ever your virginity: O God keep your love with all poſſible diligence for this divine Spouſe, who being purity itſelf, loves nothing ſo much as purity, and to whom are due the firſt fruits of all things, but principally thoſe of our love. S. *Jerome*'s epiſtles will furniſh you with all advices neceſſary for you. And ſeeing your condition obliges you to obedience, chooſe you a guide, under whoſe direction you may more holily dedicate your heart and body to his divine majeſty.

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THE

FOURTH PART

OF THE

INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING

NECESSARY ADVICES

Againſt the moſt ordinary TEMPTATIONS.

CHAP. I.

That we muſt not concern ourſelves about what the children of the world ſhall ſay.

AS ſoon as the worldlings ſhall perceive that you deſire to follow a devout life, they will diſcharge againſt you a thouſand arrows of their mockeries and detractions. The moſt malicious will ſlander your change, calling it hypocriſy, bigotry, and artifice. They will ſay that the world has frowned upon you, and that being rejected by the world, you are for having recourſe to God. Your friends will ſtrain themſelves to make you a world of remonſtrances, which they imagine to be very wiſe and charitable. They will tell you, you will fall into ſome melancholy humour; that you will loſe your credit in the world, and make yourſelf inſupportable; that you will grow old before your time; that your domeſtical affairs will

ſuffet thereby; that you muſt live in the world, as one in the world; that ſalvation may be had without ſo many myſteries; and a thouſand ſuch like impertinences.

Dear *Philothea*, all this is but fooliſh and empty babling. Theſe people have no concern for your health or for your affairs. *If you were of the world*, ſays our bleſſed Saviour, John xv. 19. *the world would love its own: but becauſe you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* We have ſeen gentlemen and ladies paſs the whole night, nay many nights together, in playing at cheſs or at cards, (and is there any attention more uneaſy, more melancholy, and more gloomy than that?) and yet worldlings ſaid not a word, friends never troubled themſelves at that; but for one hour ſpent in meditation, or for our riſing in the morning a little earlier than ordinary, to prepare ourſelves for communion, every one runs to the phyſician to cure us of hypocondriac humours and vapours. You may paſs thirty nights in dancing, and none ſhall complain of it; but for watching only one *Chriſtmas* night, every one coughs, and complains of the gripes the next morning. Who ſees not that the world is an unjuſt judge, gracious and favourable to its own children, but harſh and rigorous to the children of God?

We can never be well with the world, but in loſing ourſelves with it; it is impoſſible for us to content it, it is too fantaſtical. *John came neither eating nor drinking*, (ſays our Saviour, S. Luke vii. 33.) *and ye ſay he has a devil: the Son of man is come eating and drinking, and ye ſay, Behold a man that is a glutton, and a drinker of wine.* It is the truth *Philothea*, if by condeſcenſion, we give ourſelves the liberty to laugh, to play and to dance with the world, it will be ſcandalized at us; and if we do not ſo, it will accuſe us of hypocriſy or melancholy: if we dreſs ourſelves out, the world will interpret it to be done

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for ſome ill end; if we neglect our dreſs, it will impute it to a meanneſs of heart. Our mirth will be termed diſſolution; and our mortification ſullenneſs: and as it thus looks upon us with an evil eye, we can never be agreeable to it. It aggravates our imperfections, publiſhing them for ſins; our venial ſins it makes mortal, and our ſins of frailty it turns into ſins of malice. And whereas *charity* is benevolent and kind (as S. *Paul* ſays) the world is malicious; *charity* thinks no evil, the world on the contrary always thinks evil, and when it cannot accuſe our actions, it will accuſe our intentions. So that have the ſheep horns or no, be they white or black, the wolf will not ſpare to devour them, if he can.

Do what we can, the world will ſtill make war againſt us: if we be long at confeſſion, it will wonder how we can have ſo much to ſay; if we ſtay but a ſhort while, it will ſay, we have not confeſſed all; it will obſerve all our motions, and for one little word of anger it will proteſt that we are inſupportable: The care of our affairs will ſeem to it covetouſneſs, and our meekneſs fooliſhneſs. But as for the children of the world, their anger is called generoſity, their avarice is good huſbandry, their familiarities honourable entertainments: the ſpiders always ſpoil the work of the bees.

Let us let alone this blind world, *Philothea*, let it cry as long as it will, like an owl to diſquiet the birds of the day: let us be conſtant in our deſigns, invariable in our reſolutions; our perſeverance will demonſtrate whether it be in good earneſt, that we have ſacrificed ourſelves to God, and dedicated ourſelves to a devout Life. Comets and planets are almoſt of an equal light in appearance; but comets after a ſhort time diſappear, being only certain fiery exhalations, which paſs away, whereas planets keep a perpetual brightneſs: ſo hypocriſy and true virtue have a great reſemblance in outward ſhew, but the one is eaſily

known from the other; becauſe hypocriſy cannot ſtand its ground long, but quickly is diſſipated like ſmoke, but true virtue is always firm and conſtant.

It is of no ſmall benefit to us for the ſecuring of our devotion, in the beginning, to ſuffer reproaches and calumny on the account of it; for by that means we avoid the danger of vanity and pride, which are like the midwives of *Egypt*, to whom the infernal *Pharao* has given in charge to kill the male children of the *Iſraelites*, the very day of their birth. We are crucified to the world, and the world ought to be crucified to us; it looks upon us as fools, let us look upon it as mad.

CHAP. II.

That we muſt always have a good courage.

LIGHT, though it be beautiful and lovely to our eyes, dazzles them, nevertheleſs, after we have been long in the dark. And before we are grown familiar with the inhabitants of any country, let them be ever ſo courteous and gracious, we find ourſelves ſomewhat ſtrange amongſt them. It may very well be, dear *Philothea*, that upon this change of life, you may feel riſings in your interior, and that this great and general farewell, which you have bid to the follies and vanities of the world, may make ſome impreſſions on you of ſadneſs and diſcouragement. If this ſhould happen, have a little patience, I pray: for it will be nothing; it is but a little ſtrangeneſs, which the novelty brings with it, when that is paſſed you ſhall receive ten thouſand conſolations.

It will trouble you may be at firſt to forſake that glory which fools and mockers gave you in your vanities; but, O good God, would you for the ſake of that loſe eternal glory, which God will give you in truth? The vain amuſements and paſtimes, in which you have employed your paſt years, will repreſent themſelves

themſelves again to your heart to allure it, and to cauſe it to turn towards them; but can you have the heart to renounce this bleſſed eternity for ſuch deceitful fooleries? Believe me, if you perſevere, you will quickly receive ſuch cordial ſweetneſſes, ſo delicious and agreeeable, that you will confeſs, that the world has nothing but gall in compariſon of this honey, and that one only day of devotion is worth more than a thouſand years of a worldly life.

But you ſee, that the mountain of Chriſtian perfection is exceeding high: O my God, (ſay you) how ſhall I be able to aſcend? Courage, *Philothea.* When the young *bees* begin to take ſhape, we call them nymphs, and as yet they cannot fly upon the flowers, nor to the mountains, nor to the neighbouring hills, to gather honey: but by little and little, feeding on the honey, which the old ones have prepared, theſe little young ones get wings and grow ſtrong, ſo that afterwards they fly to ſeek their food all over the country. It is true, we are as yet but little *bees* in devotion, we are not able to fly ſo high as we deſign; which is nothing leſs than to reach to the top of Chriſtian perfection; but yet we begin to take ſhape by our deſires and reſolutions, and our wings begin to grow: we muſt then hope, that we ſhall be one day ſpiritual *bees*, and ſhall be able to fly; in the mean time let us feed upon the honey of ſo many good inſtructions as the ancient devout perſons have left us, and let us pray to God to give us wings like a *dove*, that we may not only fly, during the time of this preſent life, but alſo reſt in the eternity of that life which is to come.

CHAP. III.

Of the nature of temptations, and of the difference there is between the feeling of a temptation and the conſenting to it.

REpreſent to yourſelf, *Philothea*, a young princeſs extremely beloved by her ſpouſe, and that ſome wicked man, in order to debauch her, and defile her marriage-bed, ſends her ſome infamous meſſenger of love, to treat with her about his wretched deſign: *Firſt*, this meſſenger propoſes to this princeſs the intention of his maſter: *Secondly*, the princeſs is pleaſed or diſpleaſed with the propoſition and the meſſage: *Thirdly*, ſhe either conſents or refuſes. In like manner Satan, the world, and the fleſh, ſeeing a ſoul eſpouſed to the Son of God, ſend to her temptations and ſuggeſtions, by which, 1. Sin is propoſed to her: 2. She is either pleaſed or diſpleaſed with the motion: 3. In fine, ſhe either conſents or refuſes; which are in ſum the three ſteps to deſcend to iniquity; temptation, delectation, and conſent. And though theſe three actions are not ſo manifeſtly diſcerned in all other kinds of ſins, yet are they palpably ſeen in great and enormous ſins.

Though the temptation to any ſin whatſoever ſhould laſt all our life long, it could not render us diſagreeable to the divine Majeſty, provided we were not pleaſed with it, and did not conſent to it: the reaſon is, becauſe in temptation we do not act, but ſuffer, and in this we take no pleaſure, ſo we can not incur any kind of guilt. St. *Paul* ſuffered a long time the temptations of the fleſh, and yet was ſo far from being diſpleaſing to God on that account, that on the contrary, God was glorified by that occaſion. The bleſſed *Angela de Fulgino* felt ſuch cruel temptations of the fleſh, that ſhe moves to compaſſion when ſhe relates them. Great likewiſe were the temptati-

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tions which St. *Francis* and St. *Bennet* ſuffered, when the one caſt himſelf naked into the thorns, and the other into the ſnow, to mitigate them; yet they loſt nothing of God's grace for all that, but grew very much in grace.

You muſt then be very courageous, *Philothea*, amidſt temptations, and never look upon yourſelf overcome ſo long as they diſpleaſe you, obſerving well the difference there is between feeling and conſenting; which is, that we may feel them, though they diſpleaſe us; but we can never conſent to them, unleſs they pleaſe us, ſince the being pleaſed with them ordinarily ſerves as a ſtep to come to the conſent. Let then the enemies of our ſalvation preſent to us as many baits and allurements as they will, let them ſtay always at the door of our heart in order to get in, let them make us as many propoſals as they pleaſe; as long as we keep our reſolution to take no pleaſure in all this, it is not poſſible that we ſhould offend God, no more than the prince, the ſpouſe of the princeſs, whom I have repreſented, could be diſpleaſed with her for the meſſage ſent to her, if ſhe have taken no kind of pleaſure in it. Yet there is this difference between the ſoul and this princeſs in this matter, that the princeſs having heard the diſhoneſt propoſitions, may, if ſhe pleaſe, drive away the meſſenger, and hear him no more: but it is not always in the power of the ſoul, not to feel the temptation, though it be always in her power not to conſent to it: for which cauſe, although the temptation ſhould laſt and continue a long time, yet it cannot hurt us, ſo long as it is diſagreeable to us.

But as for the delectation which may follow the temptation, foraſmuch as we have two parts in the ſoul, the one the inferior, the other the ſuperior; and that the inferior does not always follow the ſuperior, but acts for itſelf apart, it happens oftentimes, that the inferior part takes delight in the temptati-

on without the consent, nay against the will of the superior. This is that dispute and that war which the Apostle S. *Paul* describes, Gal. v. 17. when he says, that the flesh lusts against the spirit, and that there is a law of the members and a law of the spirit, and the like.

Have you never seen, *Philothea*, a great wood-fire covered over with ashes? When one comes ten or twelve hours after, to seek fire there, one finds but little in the midst of the hearth, and that but hard to be found, yet there it was, since there it is found; and with it one may kindle again all the other coals, that were dead. It is just so with charity, (which is our spiritual life,) in the midst of great and violent temptations: for the temptation, casting the delectation which accompanies it into the inferior part, covers all the soul (as it seems) with ashes, and reduces the love of God into a narrow room, for it appears not any where, but only in the midst of the heart, in the fund or center of the spirit; and it scarce seems to be even there, and we have much ado to find it: yet there it is in truth, since notwithstanding all the trouble and disorder we feel in our soul and in our body, we still have a resolution never to consent to the sin, nor to the temptation; and the delectation, which pleases the outward man, displeases the inward, so that though it be all round the will, yet it is not within it: by which we see, that such delectation is contrary to the will, and being so, can be no sin.

CHAP. IV.

Two good examples on this subject.

IT so nearly concerns you to understand this well, that I will make no difficulty to explain it more at large. The young man (of whom S. *Jerome* speaks) who

being laid moſt delicately and faſtened down with bands of ſilk on a ſoft bed, was provoked by all ſorts of filthy allurements by a laſcivious woman, who was employed (by the perſecutors) on purpoſe to ſtagger his conſtancy, muſt he not have felt ſtrange diſorders? Muſt not his ſenſes have been ſeized with delectation, and his imagination extremely poſſeſt with the preſence of thoſe voluptuous objects? No doubt of it: and yet amongſt ſo many troubles, in the midſt of ſuch a terrible ſtorm of temptations, and ſo many luſtful pleaſures which ſurrounded him, he ſufficiently teſtified, that his heart was not overcome, and that his will gave no conſent; when his ſpirit, perceiving ſo general a rebellion againſt it, and having now no part of the body at command but the tongue, he bit it off with his teeth, and ſpit it in the face of that filthy woman, who tormented his ſoul more cruelly by her luſt, than all the executioners could ever have done by the greateſt torments; for the tyrant deſpairing to conquer him by pains, thought to overcome him by theſe pleaſures.

The hiſtory of the conflict of St. *Catharine* of *Sienna*, on the like occaſion, is very admirable: the ſubſtance of it as follows. The wicked ſpirit had permiſſion from God to aſſault the purity of this holy virgin with the greateſt fury he was able, yet ſo as not to be allowed to touch her. He preſented then all kind of impure ſuggeſtions to her heart: and to move her the more, coming with his companions in form of men and women, he committed a thouſand kinds of watonneſſes and immodeſties in her ſight, adding moſt filthy words and invitations. And altho' all theſe things were exterior, nevertheleſs by means of the ſenſes they penetrated deep into the heart of the virgin, (which as ſhe herſelf confeſſed) was even brim full of them; ſo that nothing remained in her, but only the pure ſuperior will, which was not ſhaken with this tempeſt of filthineſs and carnal delectation.

And this went on for a long time, till one day our Saviour appearing to her, ſhe ſaid to him, Where were you, my ſweet Saviour, when my heart was full of ſo great darkneſs and uncleanneſs? To which he anſwered, I was within thy heart, my daughter: And, how replied ſhe, could you dwell in my heart, where there was ſo much impurity? Can you dwell then in ſuch unclean places? And our Lord ſaid to her; Tell me, did theſe filthy thoughts of thy heart give thee pleaſure or ſadneſs, bitterneſs or delight? Moſt extreme bitterneſs and ſadneſs, ſaid ſhe. And our Saviour replied, Who was it then that put this great bitterneſs and ſadneſs into thy heart, but I, who remained there hidden within the midſt of thy ſoul? Believe me, daughter, had I not been there preſent, theſe thoughts which ſurrounded thy will, and could not prevail, had doubtleſs overcome it, and entered in, and had been received with pleaſure by thy free will, and ſo had brought death to thy ſoul. But becauſe I was within, I put this dipleaſure and this reſiſtance into thy heart; by which it rejected the temtation as much as it could, and not being able to do it as much as it would, it conceived a greater diſpleaſure and a greater hatred againſt it, and againſt itſelf: and thus theſe troubles were a great merit and a great advantage to thee, and a great increaſe of thy virtue and of thy ſtrength.

Do you ſee, *Philothea*, how this fire was covered with aſhes, and that the temptation had even entered into the heart, and had ſurrounded the will, which alone aſſiſted by her Saviour ſtood out, making reſiſtance by her pains, by her diſpleaſures, and her deteſtations of the evil ſuggeſted to her, and conſtantly refuſing her conſent to the ſin which beſieged her on every ſide? O! good God! what diſtreſs is it to a ſoul that loves God, not ſo much as to know whether he be within her or no; or whether the divine love, for which ſhe fights, be altogether extinguiſhed in her

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or no! But it is the fine flower of the perfection of heavenly love, to make the lover ſuffer and fight for love, not knowing whether he have that love for which and by which he fights.

CHAP. V.

An encouragement to a ſoul that is under temptations.

THESE great aſſaults and extraordinary temptations, *Philothea*, are never permitted by God, but againſt thoſe ſouls which he deſires to elevate to his pure and excellent love: yet it does not follow that they ſhall therefore be ſure afterwards to attain it; for it hath often happened that thoſe who have been conſtant under theſe violent aſſaults, for want of faithfully correſponding afterwards with the divine favour, have been overcome with very ſmall temptations. Which I tell you, to the end that, if you happen at any time to be afflicted with ſuch great temptations, you may know, that God favours you with an extraordinary favour, by which he declares, that he has a will to make you great in his ſight; and that nevertheleſs you are to be always humble and fearful, not aſſuring yourſelf that you ſhall be able to overcome ſmall temptations after you have prevailed againſt great ones, any otherwiſe than by a continual fidelity towards his majeſty.

What temptations ſoever then ſhall happen to you, and what delectations ſoever ſhall follow upon them, ſo long as your will ſhall refuſe her conſent, not only to the temptation but alſo to the delectation, trouble not yourſelf by any means, for God is not offended with it. When a man is in a fit, ſo as to ſhew no longer any ſign of life, they lay their hand on his heart, and by the leaſt motion they feel there, they judge him to be alive, and that by the means of ſome precious water, or ſome reſtorative, he may be

brought again to his ſtrength and to his ſenſe: ſo it happens ſometimes, that by the violence of temptations, our ſoul ſeems to be fallen into a total loſs of all her ſtrength, and that being as it were in a fit, ſhe has no longer any ſpiritual life or motion; but if we deſire to know how it is with her, let us lay our hand on the heart, let us conſider whether the heart and the will ſtill retain their ſpiritual motion, that is to ſay, whether they do their duty in refuſing to conſent and to yield to the temptation and delectation; for ſo long as this motion of refuſal is in our heart, we may be aſſured that charity, which is the life of our ſoul, is yet in us, and that Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour is there preſent, though hidden and covered; ſo that by means of the continual exerciſe of prayer, of the ſacraments, and of confidence in God, our ſtrength will return to us, and we ſhall live a ſound, hearty, and ſweet life.

CHAP. VI.

How temptation and delectation may be ſin.

THE princeſs of whom we have ſpoken, could not hinder the diſhoneſt ſuit which was made to her, becauſe, as we have preſuppoſed, it was made to her againſt her will: but if, on the contrary, ſhe had by any inticements given occaſion to ſuch a motion, having been willing to give her love to him that courted her; doubtleſs ſhe would have been guilty of the motion itſelf; and however ſhe might diſſemble it, would certainly deſerve both blame and puniſhment. So it ſometimes happens, that the temptation alone brings us into ſin, becauſe we are the cauſe of it. For example; I know, that when I play, I fall eaſily into violent paſſion and blaſphemy, and that gaming ſerves me as a temptation to thoſe ſins; I ſin therefore as often as I play, and I am guilty of all the temptations which ſhall befal me

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in play. In like manner, if I know that ſome certain converſations bring me into temptation, and cauſe me to fall into ſin, and yet I willingly expoſe myſelf to them, I am doubtleſs guilty of all the temptations I ſhall meet with on thoſe occaſions.

When the delectation, which proceeds from the temptation, may be avoided, it is always a ſin to admit it; greater or leſs, according to the pleaſure which we take in it, and the conſent which we give to it is great or little, of long or ſhort continuance. It would be always blameworthy in the young princeſs, of whom we were ſpeaking, if ſhe not only ſhould hear the filthy and diſhoneſt propoſal made to her, but alſo, after ſhe has heard it, ſhould take pleaſure in it, entertaining her heart with ſatisfaction on this object. For although ſhe has not a will to conſent to the real execution of what is propoſed to her, ſhe conſents nevertheleſs to the interior application of her heart to the evil by the pleaſure which ſhe takes in it; and it is always diſhoneſt to apply either the heart or the body to any diſhoneſt thing: nay, diſhoneſty conſiſts ſo much in the application of the heart, that without it the application of the body could not be ſin.

Wherefore when you ſhall have been tempted by any ſin, conſider whether you have willingly given occaſion to your being tempted; for then the temptation itſelf puts you in a ſtate of ſin, by reaſon of the danger into which you have flung yourſelf: which is to be underſtood, if you could conveniently have avoided the occaſion, and that you did foreſee, or ought to have foreſeen the coming of the temptation: but if you have given no occaſion to the temptation, it can not any way be imputed to you for a ſin.

When the delectation, which follows the temptation, might have been avoided, and yet one has not avoided it, there is always ſome kind of ſin, according

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ing as one has ſtaid upon it leſs or more, and according to what has been the cauſe of the pleaſure one has taken in it. A woman who has given no occaſion to her being courted, and yet takes pleaſure in it, is nevertheleſs to be blamed, if the pleaſure ſhe takes in it have no other cauſe than the courting. But if, for example, the gallant who ſues for love ſhould play excellently well upon the lute, and ſhe ſhould take pleaſure, not in his ſuing for her love, but in the harmony and ſweetneſs of his lute, this would not be a ſin: though ſhe ought not to continue long in this pleaſure, for fear ſhe ſhould paſs from that to a delectation in being courted. In like manner, if any one ſhould propoſe to me ſome ſtratagem, full of invention and art, to take revenge of my enemy, and that I ſhould take no delight in, nor give any conſent to the revenge which is propoſed, but only be pleaſed with the ſubtilty of the artful invention, to be ſure I ſhould not ſin, though it would not be expedient that I ſhould continue long amuſing myſelf with this pleaſure, for fear leſt by little and little it might carry me to take ſome delight in the revenge itſelf.

One is ſometimes ſurpriſed with ſome tickling of delectation, which immediately follows the temptation, before we are well aware of it; and that at moſt can only be a light venial ſin, which becomes greater, if, after we have perceived the evil which is upon us, we ſtay ſome time through negligence to bargain as it were whether we ſhould admit or reject that delectation; and the ſin is greater ſtill, if after being aware of the delectation, we dwell upon it ſome time by downright negligence, without any ſort of purpoſe to reject it: but when voluntarily, and with full deliberation we reſolve to pleaſe ourſelves in ſuch delectations, this ſame deliberate purpoſe is a great ſin, if the object in which we take delight be a great ſin. It is a great vice in a woman to be willing to entertain diſhoneſt loves, although ſhe never deſigns to yield herſelf up really to her lovers.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Remedies againſt great temptations.

AS ſoon as you perceive in yourſelf any temptations, do as little children, when they ſee a *wolf* or a *bear* in the country; for preſently they run into their father's or mother's arms, or at leaſt they call them to their help or aſſiſtance. Run you in like manner to God, crying out for his mercy and his aſſiſtance. It is the remedy which our Lord has taught, Matt. xxvi. 41. *Pray leſt you enter into temptation.* If you find that the temptation nevertheleſs ſtill continues, or even increaſes, run in ſpirit to embrace the holy croſs, as if you ſaw our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt crucified before you; proteſt, that you will never conſent to the temptation, and beg his help againſt it, and continue ſtill proteſting that you will not conſent, as long as the temptation ſhall continue.

But in making theſe proteſtations and theſe refuſals of conſent, look not the temptation in the face, but look only on our Lord: for if you look at the temptation, principally when it is ſtrong, it might ſhake your courage. Divert your mind with ſome good and commendable occupations, for ſuch occupations coming into your heart, and taking place, will chaſe away the evil temptations and ſuggeſtions.

The great remedy againſt all temptations, great or ſmall, is to lay open one's heart, and to communicate the ſuggeſtions, feelings and affections which we have to our director. For take notice, that the firſt condition the wicked one makes with a ſoul which he deſires to ſeduce, is to keep ſilence; as they do who having a mind to ſeduce women, or girls, at the very firſt forbid them to communicate their propoſals to their parents or huſbands; whereas God, on the other ſide, in his inſpirations, requires before all things

things that we ſhould make them known to our ſuperiors and conductors.

If after all this the temptation ſhould continue obſtinately to harraſs and perſecute us, we have nothing to do, but on our part alſo to continue as reſolute in our proteſtation, that we will never conſent to it: for as maids can never be married ſo long as they ſay no; ſo the ſoul, altho' ſhe may be troubled, can never be made to ſin ſo long as ſhe ſays no.

Diſpute not with your enemy, and never anſwer him one word, unleſs it be that which our Saviour anſwered, with which he confounded him: *Be gone, Satan, the Lord thy God ſhalt thou adore, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* And as a chaſte wife ſhould not anſwer one word, nor look once in the face of the wicked wretch, that makes any diſhoneſt propoſal to her; but leaving him abruptly, ſhould at the ſame inſtant turn her heart towards her huſband, and renew the promiſe of allegiance which ſhe has made to him, without amuſing herſelf to diſpute with the other; ſo the devout ſoul, that ſees herſelf aſſaulted by any temptation, ought by no means to loſe time in diſputing or anſwering, but ſhould with all ſimplicity turn herſelf towards Jeſus Chriſt her Spouſe, and renew her proteſtation of fidelity to him, and her reſolution to remain ſolely and entirely his for ever.

CHAP. VIII.

That we muſt reſiſt ſmall temptations.

ALTHO' we are to fight againſt great temptations with an invincible courage, and that the victory we gain over them is extremely advantageous to us; it may happen nevertheleſs that we may profit more in fighting well againſt ſmall ones: for as great temptations exceed in quality, ſo the leſſer exceed without compariſon in number; inſomuch that the victory over them may be comparable

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to that over the greateſt. Wolves and bears are without doubt more dangerous than flies; yet they do not trouble and diſquiet us ſo much, nor exerciſe our patience ſo much. It is a very eaſy thing to refrain from murder, but 'tis a hard thing to reſtrain all the little ſallies of paſſion; the occaſions of which are every moment preſenting themſelves. It is a very eaſy thing for a man or a woman to keep themſelves from adultery; but it is not ſo eaſy a thing to refrain from glances of the eyes, from giving or receiving love, from procuring little fooliſh favours, from ſpeaking or hearkening to flattering words. It is eaſy not to admit a corrival with the huſband or wife as to the body, but not ſo eaſy as to the heart; very eaſy to refrain from defiling the marriage bed, but very hard to keep from every thing that may be prejudicial to marriage-love; very eaſy not to ſteal other mens goods, but hard not to affect or deſire them; very eaſy not to bear falſe witneſs in judgment, but hard never to tell a lye in converſation; very eaſy not to be drunk, but hard to keep one's ſelf perfectly ſober; very eaſy not to deſire another man's death, but hard never to deſire what may be inconvenient to him; eaſy to forbear defaming him, but hard never to deſpiſe him. In a word, theſe leſſer temptations of anger, of ſuſpicions, of jealouſy, of envy, of fond love, of levity, of vanity, of inſincerity, of affectation, of artfulneſs, of diſhoneſt thoughts, are continually aſſaulting even thoſe who are the moſt devout and reſolute. We muſt therefore prepare ourſelves, my dear *Philothea*, with great care and diligence for this war; and be aſſured, that as many victories as we ſhall gain over theſe leſſer enemies, ſo many precious ſtones ſhall be put into the crown of glory, which God is preparing for us in heaven. Wherefore I ſay, that being ever ready to fight well, and with courage, againſt great temptations, if they come, we muſt in the mean time, take good care diligently to defend ourſelves againſt theſe leſſer and weaker aſſaults.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

What remedies we are to employ againſt ſmall temptations.

NOW as to theſe leſſer temptations of vanity, ſuſpicion, fretfulneſs, jealouſy, envy, fond love, and ſuch like traſh, which like flies and gnats come hovering before our eyes, and ſometimes ſting us upon the cheek, ſometimes upon the noſe, for as much as it is impoſſible to be altogether free from their importunity, the beſt reſiſtance we can make againſt them is not to torment ourſelves for them; for they cannot hurt us, tho' they may be troubleſome to us, as long as we continue in a ſtrong reſolution to give ourſelves in earneſt to the ſervice of God.

Deſpiſe then theſe petty aſſaults, and vouchſafe not ſo much as to think on that which they would ſuggeſt; let them buz about your ears as much as they liſt, and hover here and there about you; as we do with flies, and when they offer to ſting you, or that you ſhall perceive them any way to alight upon your heart, coutent yourſelf with quietly removing them; not ſtanding to fight or diſpute with them, but performing ſome actions contrary to them, of what kind ſoever they are, and eſpecially acts of the love of God. For if you will believe me, you ſhall not inſiſt much upon oppoſing the acts of the contrary virtue to the temptation which you feel, for that would be as it were to have a mind to diſpute with it; but after having performed one act of that virtue which is directly contrary to the temptation, (if you have had leiſure to obſerve the quality of the temptation) turn your heart gently towards Jeſus Chriſt crucified, and by an act of love towards him kiſs his ſacred feet. This ſame is the beſt means to overcome the enemy, as well in little, as in great temptations: for the love of God, containing in itſelf

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the perfections of all the virtues, and even more excellently than the virtues themſelves, is alſo a more ſovereign remedy againſt all vices; and your mind, accuſtoming itſelf in all temptations to recur to this general rendezvous, ſhall not need to look and examine what temptations it has, but perceiving itſelf troubled, will, without more ado, quiet itſelf by this grand remedy; which moreover is ſo terrible to the wicked enemy, that when he once ſees that his temptations incite us to this divine love, he leaves off tempting us. And thus much may ſuffice concerning ſmall and frequent temptations, with which whoſoever would amuſe himſelf more in particular, would give himſelf much trouble, and to no good purpoſe.

CHAP. X.

How to fortify our hearts againſt temptations.

CONSIDER from time to time what paſſions are moſt predominant in your ſoul, and having diſcovered them, take ſuch a method of life as is quite contrary to them in your thoughts, in your words, and in your works. For example: if you find yourſelf inclined to the paſſion of vanity, think often on the miſery of this human life, how much uneaſineſs theſe vanities ſhall give to your conſcience at the day of your death, how unworthy they are of a generous heart, that they are but empty toys and amuſements for children, and ſuch like things. Speak alſo often againſt vanity; and altho' it ſeem to go againſt you, ceaſe not to cry it down, for by this means you ſhall engage yourſelf even in honour to the oppoſite ſide; and by much ſpeaking againſt a thing, we bring ourſelves to hate it, tho' at firſt we had an affection to it. Exerciſe the works of abjection and of humility as much as you are able, tho' it ſeem to you to go againſt the grain; for by this means you accuſtom yourſelf

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to humility, and you weaken your vanity; ſo that when the temptation ſhall come, your inclination will not be able to favour it ſo much, and you will have more ſtrength to fight againſt it.

If you are inclined to covetouſneſs, think often on the folly of this ſin, which makes us ſlaves to that which was only made to ſerve us; aud that at death we muſt part with all, and leave it in the hands of one that will ſquander it away, or to whom it may be a cauſe of ruin and damnation, &c. Speak aloud againſt avarice, and praiſe very much the contempt of the world: force yourſelf to give frequent alms, and charities, and to let ſlip ſome occaſions of gain. If your inclinations carry you to give or receive fond love, often think how very dangerous this kind of amuſement is as well to yourſelf as to others; how unworthy a thing it is to profane and employ in an idle paſtime the nobleſt affection we have in our ſoul, how worthy this is to be blamed, as an extreme lightneſs of mind: ſpeak often in praiſe of purity and ſimplicity of heart, and let your actions to the beſt of your power be ever agreeable to it, by avoiding all levities and fond liberties. In ſhort, in time of peace, that is to ſay, when the temptations of the ſin, to which you are moſt inclined, do not preſs upon you, make many acts of the contrary virtue; and if the occaſions do not preſent themſelves, ſeek to meet with them; for by this means you will arm and ſtrengthen your heart againſt future temptations.

CHAP. XI.

Of unquietneſs.

UNQUIETNESS is not a ſingle temptation, but a ſource from which and through which many temptations come upon us. I will then ſay ſomething concerning it. Sadneſs is nothing elſe but a grief

a grief of mind, conceived for ſome evil which is in us againſt our will, whether the evil be exterior, as poverty, ſickneſs, contempt; or be interior, as ignorance, dryneſs, repugnance, and temptation. When the ſoul then perceives that ſhe has ſome evil, ſhe is diſpleaſed with having it, and this is ſadneſs, and preſently ſhe deſires to be freed from it, and to have the means to get rid of it; and hitherto ſhe has reaſon, for every one naturally deſires good, and flies from that which he apprehends to be evil. If the ſoul ſeeks the means to be delivered from her evil, for the love of God, ſhe will ſeek them with patience, meekneſs, humility, and tranquillity, expecting her deliverance more from the goodneſs and providence of God, than from her own labour, induſtry, or diligence; but if ſhe ſeek her deliverance for the love of herſelf, then will ſhe hurry and heat herſelf in queſt of theſe means, as if this good depended more on herſelf than on God: I do not ſay that ſhe thinks ſo, but that ſhe hurries herſelf, as if ſhe thought ſo. Now if ſhe meets not immediately with that which ſhe deſires, ſhe falls into great diſquiets and impatiences; and theſe not removing, but on the contrary increaſing the former evil, the poor ſoul enters into an extreme anguiſh, and diſtreſs, with ſuch a loſs of all courage and ſtrength, as to imagine her evil to be now without remedy. You ſee then how the ſadneſs, which in the beginning is juſt, begets unquietneſs, and unquietneſs afterwards begets an increaſe of ſadneſs, which is extremely dangerous.

Unquietneſs is the greateſt evil that can come to the ſoul, excepting ſin. For as ſeditions and inteſtine troubles of any commonwealth ruin it entirely, and hinder it from being able to reſiſt a foreign invaſion; ſo our heart, being troubled and diſquieted within itſelf, loſes the ſtrength to maintain the virtues it had acquired, and in proportion the means to reſiſt the temptations of the enemy, who at that time uſes

uſes all kind of efforts to fiſh, as they ſay, in troubled waters.

Unquietneſs proceeds from an inordinate deſire of being delivered from the evil we feel, or of acquiring the good we hope for: and yet there is nothing which more increaſes the evil, and which removes the good further off than unquietneſs and hurry. Birds remain priſoners in the nets and ſnares, becauſe, finding themſelves engaged, they eagerly flutter and beat about to get looſe, and by that means entangle themſelves the more. When then you ſhall be preſſed with a deſire to be freed from ſome evil, or attain to ſome good, before all things ſettle your mind in repoſe and tranquillity, and both ſtill your judgment and your will; and then fair and ſoftly procure the iſſue of your deſire, taking in order the means which ſhall be convenient for it: and when I ſay fair and ſoftly, I do not mean negligently, but without hurry, trouble and unquietneſs; otherwiſe, inſtead of obtaining the effect of your deſire, you will ſpoil all, and embarraſs yourſelf the more.

My ſoul is always in my hands, O Lord, and I have not forgotten thy law, ſaid *David*, Pſ. cxviii. 104. Examine more than once a day, or at leaſt morning and evening, whether you have your ſoul in your own hands, or whether ſome paſſion or diſquiet has not robbed you of it. Conſider whether you have your heart at command, or whether it be not eſcaped out of your hands, for to engage itſelf to ſome diſorderly affection of love, hatred, envy, covetouſneſs, fear, uneaſineſs, or joy; and if it is gone aſtray, before you do any thing elſe, ſeek it, and bring it back quietly to the preſence of God, ſubjecting all your affections and deſires to the obedience and direction of his divine will: for as they that are afraid of loſing any thing which is precious to them, hold it faſt in their hand; ſo, in imitation of this great king, we ſhould always ſay,

O my

O my God, my ſoul is in danger, and therefore I carry it always in my hand; and in this manner I have not forgotten your holy law.

Permit not your deſires, be they ever ſo ſmall, and of ever ſo ſmall importance, to diſquiet you; for after the ſmall ones, thoſe that are greater and more important will find your heart more diſpoſed to trouble and diſorder. When you ſhall perceive unquietneſs to come upon you, recommend yourſelf to God, and reſolve to do nothing at all of that which your deſire demands of you, till that diſquiet be totally paſſed, unleſs it ſhould be ſomething that cannot be deferred, and then you muſt by ſome gentle and quiet effort reſtrain the current of your deſire, tempering and moderating it as much as you ſhall be able; and then do that which is to be done, not according to your deſire, but according to reaſon.

If you can diſcover your unquietneſs to him that has the conduct of your ſoul, or at leaſt to ſome faithful and devout friend, doubt not but preſently you ſhall find eaſe; for the communicating of the griefs of the heart works the ſame effect in the ſoul, as letting blood does in the body of him that is in a continual fever: and this is the remedy of remedies. Accordingly the holy king S. *Lewis* gave this counſel to his Son: *If thou haſt any uneaſineſs in thy heart, tell it preſently to thy confeſſor or or to ſome good perſon, and then thou ſhalt be enabled to bear thy evil very eaſily, by the comfort he will give thee.*

CHAP. XII.

Of ſadneſs.

THE ſadneſs that is according to God (ſays S. *Paul*) *worketh penance ſtedfaſt unto ſalvation,* 2 Cor. vii. *but ſadneſs of the world worketh death.* Sadneſs then may be good or evil, according to the different productions which it brings forth in us. It is true that

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it brings forth more evil ones than good ones; for it has but two that are good, compaſſion and repentance; and there are ſix that are evil, viz. anxiety, ſloth, indignation, jealouſy, envy and impatience; which cauſed the wiſe man to ſay, *ſadneſs kills many, and there is no profit in it*; Ecclus. xxx. 25. becauſe for two good ſtreams which flow from the ſource of ſadneſs, there are ſix that are very evil.

The enemy makes uſe of ſadneſs to exerciſe temptations againſt the juſt; for as he endeavours to make the wicked rejoice in their ſins, ſo he ſtrives to make the good grieve in their good works: and as he cannot procure evil to be committed, but by making it appear agreeable; ſo he cannot divert us from good, but by making it appear diſagreeable. This wicked one is pleaſed with ſadneſs and melancholy, becauſe he is ſad and melancholy, and ſhall be ſo eternally; therefore he deſires that every one ſhould be like himſelf.

The ſadneſs which is evil troubles the ſoul, puts her into diſquiet, cauſes inordinate fears, gives a diſtaſte of prayer, dulls and oppreſſes the brain, deprives the ſoul of counſel, of reſolution, of judgment, and of courage; and deſtroys her ſtrength. To be ſhort, it is like a hard winter, that demoliſhes all the beauty of the country, and devours all the living creatures; for it takes away all ſweetneſs from the ſoul, and renders her in a manner lame and diſabled in all her faculties. If you ſhould at any time be ſeized with this evil ſadneſs, *Philothea*, uſe the following remedies.

Is any one ſad (ſays S. *James*, v. 13.) *let him pray.* Prayer is a ſovereign remedy, for it lifts up the ſpirit to God, who is our only joy and conſolation. But in praying, uſe affections, and words, whether interior or exterior, which tend to a holy confidence, and to the love of God, ſuch as, *O God of mercy, O infinite goodneſs, O my ſweet Saviour, O God of my heart, my joy and my hope, O my dear Spouſe, the well-beloved of my Soul*; and the like.

Oppoſe

Oppoſe vigorouſly the inclinations of ſadneſs, and altho' it ſeem to you that all you ſhall do at that time is performed coldly, heavily, and looſely, yet go on doing it; for the enemy, who ſeeks to make us weary of good works by ſadneſs, ſeeing that we ceaſe not to do them, and that being done in ſpite of his oppoſition they become more meritorious, will forbear to trouble us any longer.

Sing ſpiritual canticles, for the devil has often left off his operations by this means; witneſs the evil ſpirit that afflicted or poſſeſſed *Saul*, whoſe violence was repreſſed by ſuch muſic. It is alſo good to employ ourſelves in exterior works, and to vary them as much as we can, ſo to divert the ſoul from the melancholy object, to purify and warm the ſpirits, ſadneſs being a paſſion of a cold and dry complexion.

Perform external actions of fervour, altho you do them without reliſh; ſuch as embracing the crucifix, preſſing it cloſe to your breaſt, kiſſing the feet and the hands, lifting up your eyes and your hands to heaven, raiſing your voice to God by words of love and of confidence like theſe, *My beloved is mine, and I am his. My beloved is to me a poſy of myrrh, he ſhall dwell between my breaſts. My eyes have fainted after thee, O my God, ſaying, When wilt thou comfort me? O Jeſus, be thou a Jeſus to me. Live ſweet Jeſus, and my ſoul ſhall live. Who ſhall ever ſeparate me from the love of my God?* and ſuch like.

The moderate uſe of the diſcipline is alſo good againſt ſadneſs, becauſe this voluntary exterior affliction obtains interior conſolation, and the ſoul, feeling pain without, diverts herſelf from the pains which are within. Frequenting alſo the holy communion is excellent in theſe caſes; for this heavenly bread ſtrengthens the heart, and rejoices the ſpirit.

Diſcover all the feelings, affections and ſuggeſtions, which proceed from your ſadneſs, humbly and faithfully to your guide and confeſſor. Seek the converſation

ſation of ſpiritual perſons, and frequent their company as much as you can, during theſe times. And in fine, to conclude, reſign yourſelf into the hands of God, preparing yourſelf to ſuffer this troubleſome ſadneſs patiently, as a juſt Puniſhment of your vain joys: and doubt not at all but God, after he ſhall have tried you, will deliver you from this evil.

CHAP. XIII.

Of ſpiritual and ſenſible conſolations, and how we muſt behave ourſelves in them.

GOD continues the being of this great world in a perpetual viciſſitude, by which the day is always ſucceeded by the night, the ſpring by the ſummer, the ſummer by the autumn, the autumn by the winter, and the winter by the ſpring again: and one day is never perfectly like another; ſome are cloudy, ſome rainy, ſome dry, ſome windy; a variety, which gives a great beauty to this univerſe. It is the ſame with man, who, according to the ſaying of the antients, is an abridgment of the world, or another little world: for he is never long in one and the ſame ſtate, and his life flows away upon the earth, like the waters floating and undulating in a perpetual diverſity of motion, which ſometimes lift him up with hope, ſometimes bring him down with fear, ſometimes carry him to the right hand by conſolation, ſometimes to the left by affliction; and not one of his days, no, nor even one of his hours, is in all points like to another.

Now this is a neceſſary admonition: that we ſhould endeavour to preſerve a continual and inviolable equality of heart, in ſo great an inequality of occurrences. And altho' all things turn and change variouſly round about us, that we ſhould continue conſtantly immoveable, ever looking, tending and aſpiring towards our God. Let the ſhip take what courſe you pleaſe,

pleaſe, let it ſail towards the eaſt, weſt, north, or ſouth, what wind ſoever it be that carries it, never will the needle of the compaſs look any other way than towards the fair polar-ſtar. Let all turn upſide down, not only round about us, but even within us; that is, let our ſoul be ſorrowful or joyful, in ſweetneſs or in bitterneſs, in peace or in trouble, in light or in darkneſs, in temptation or repoſe, in guſts or in diſguſts, in dryneſs or in tenderneſs, whether the ſun burn it, or the dew refreſh it; yet always muſt the point of our heart, of our ſpirit, of our ſuperior will (which is our compaſs) look inceſſantly, and tend perpetually towards the love of God its Creator, its Saviour, its only and its ſovereign good. *Whether we live or die* (ſays the Apoſtle, Rom. xiv. 8.) *we belong to the Lord.* And *Who ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God?* No, nothing ſhall ever ſeparate us from this love; neither tribulation, nor anguiſh, nor death, nor life, nor preſent grief, nor the fear of future accidents, nor the artifices of evil ſpirits, nor the height of conſolations, nor the depth of afflictions, nor tenderneſs, nor dryneſs, ought ever to ſeparate us from this holy charity which is founded in Jeſus Chriſt.

This fixt abſolute reſolution never to forſake God, nor to abandon his ſweet love, ſerves as a counterpoiſe to our ſouls, to keep them in a holy equality amidſt the inequality of the divers motions, which the condition of this Life brings to them: for as little bees ſurpriſed by the wind in the fields, embrace gravel ſtones, that they may be able to balance themſelves in the air, and not be ſo eaſily carried away by the ſtorm; ſo our ſoul, having by reſolution ſtrongly embraced the precious love of her God, continues conſtant in the midſt of the inconſtancy and viciſſitude of conſolations and afflictions, whether ſpiritual or temporal, exterior or interior. But, beſides this general doctrine, we have need of ſome particular documents.

1. I ſay then, that devotion doth not conſiſt in that ſweetneſs, delight, conſolation, or ſenſible tenderneſs

of heart, which moves us to tears and ſighs, and gives us a certain agreeable and ſavoury ſatisfaction in ſome ſpiritual exerciſes: no, dear *Philothea*, devotion and that are not the ſame thing: for there are many ſouls which experience theſe tenderneſſes and conſolations, which nevertheleſs are very vicious, and conſequently have not any true love of God, and much leſs any true devotion. *Saul* perſecuting to death poor *David*, who was fleeing before him in the wilderneſs of *Engaddi*, entered all alone into a cavern, where David and his people were hidden: *David* who on this occaſion, might have killed him a thouſand times, ſpared his life, and would not ſo much as put him in fear; but having ſuffered him to go out at his pleaſure, afterwards called to him to remonſtrate to him his innocency, and to let him know that he had been at his mercy. Now upon this what did not *Saul* do, to ſhew that his heart was mollified towards *David?* He called him his child, he wept aloud, he praiſed him, he acknowledged his goodneſs, he prayed to God for him, he foretold his future greatneſs, and he recommended his poſterity to him. What greater ſweetneſs and tenderneſs of heart could he make ſhew of? And yet for all that he had not changed his heart, neither did he ceaſe to perſecute *David* as cruelly as before: ſo there are ſome perſons, who conſidering the goodneſs of God, and the paſſion of our Saviour, find great tenderneſſes of heart, which make them ſigh, weep, pray, and give thanks, with ſuch a feeling as that one would ſay their hearts were poſſeſſed with a very great devotion; but when this comes to the trial, we ſee, that as the paſſing ſhowers of a hot ſummer, which fall in great drops on the earth, do not ſink into it, and ſerve for nothing but to produce muſhrooms, even ſo theſe tears and theſe tenderneſſes falling on a vicious heart, and not ſinking deep into it, are altogether unprofitable to it: for notwithſtanding all this, theſe poor ſouls will not part from a farthing of their ill-gotten goods,

which

which they poſſeſs; will not renounce one of their perverſe affections; nor ſuffer the leaſt inconvenience in the world for the ſervice of our Saviour, over whom they wept: ſo that the good motions which they had were no better than certain ſpiritual muſh-rooms, which not only are not true devotion, but often times are great deceits of the enemy, who amuſes ſouls with theſe little conſolations, to make them reſt contented and ſatisfied with them, leſt they ſhould ſearch farther after the true and ſolid devotion, which conſiſts in a conſtant, reſolute, prompt and active will, to put in execution whatſoever one knows to be pleaſing to God. A child will weep tenderly, when he ſees his mother pricked with a lancet to be let blood; but if his mother for whom he is weeping would at the ſame time demand the apple or ſugar-plums, which he has in his hand, he would by no means let them go: ſuch are the moſt part of our tender devotions; ſeeing the ſtroke of the lance which pierced the heart of Jeſus Chriſt crucified, we weep tenderly. Alas, *Philothea!* it is well done to lament the painful death and paſſion of our Father and Redeemer; but why then do we not give him for good and all the apple which we have in our hands, and which he ſo earneſtly demands of us; that is, our heart, the only apple of love which this dear Saviour requires of us? Why do we not reſign up to him ſo many petty affections, delectations, and complacencies, which he wants to pull out of our hands and cannot; becauſe they are our ſugar-plums, of which we are more fond, than deſirous of his heavenly grace. Ah, *Philothea!* theſe are friendſhips of little children, tender indeed, but weak, but fantaſtical, but of no effect. Devotion then conſiſts not in theſe tenderneſſes and ſenſible affections, which ſometimes proceed from a ſoft nature, ſuſceptible of any impreſſion which one has a mind to give it, and ſometimes come from the enemy, who, to amuſe us, ſtirs up our imagination to an apprehenſion fit for ſuch effects.

2. Yet theſe tenderneſſes and delightful affections are ſometimes very good and profitable; for they excite the appetite of the ſoul, ſtrengthen the ſpirit, and add to the promptitude of devotion a holy gaiety and chearfulneſs, which makes our actions lovely and agreeable even in the exterior. This reliſh which one meets with in the things of God, is that which made *David* cry out; *O Lord, how ſweet are thy words to my palate! they are ſweeter than honey to my mouth.* And indeed the leaſt conſolation of devotion which we receive, is every way more valuable than the fineſt recreations of the world. The breaſts and the milk, that is to ſay, the favours of the heavenly ſpouſe, are ſweeter to the ſoul than the wine of the moſt precious pleaſures of the earth. He, that has once taſted them, eſteems all other conſolations no better than gall and wormwood. And as they that hold the herb *ſcitique* in their mouth, receive ſo exceſſive a ſweetneſs from it, that they feel neither hunger nor thirſt; ſo they, to whom God has given this heavenly *manna* of interior ſweetneſſes and conſolations, can neither deſire nor receive the conſolations of the world, at leaſt, ſo as to have a reliſh for them, and to entertain their affections with them: they are little foretaſtes of the immortal delights, which God gives to the ſouls that ſeek him; they are the ſugar-plums, which he gives to his little children, to allure them; they are the cordial waters, which he preſents them to ſtrengthen them; they are alſo ſometimes the earneſt of eternal felicities. They ſay, that *Alexander* the Great ſailing in the main ſea, firſt diſcovered *Arabia Felix*, by perceiving the ſweet odours which the wind brought him, and thereupon he encouraged both himſelf and his companions: ſo we oftentimes receive theſe ſweetneſſes and delights in this ſea of our mortal life, which without doubt give us a certain forefeeling of the delights of that happy and heavenly country of ours, to which we tend and aſpire.

3. But

3. But you will ſay to me, ſince there are ſenſible conſolations which are good, and which come from God; and that nevertheleſs there are others which are unprofitable, dangerous, and even pernicious, which proceed either from nature, or from the enemy; how ſhall I be able to diſtinguiſh the one from the other, and to know thoſe that are evil or unprofitable, from thoſe that are good? It is a general doctrine, dear *Philothea*, with regard to the affections and paſſions of our ſouls, that we muſt know them by their fruits. Our hearts are the trees, the affections and paſſions are the branches, and their works or actions are the fruit. That heart is good which has good affections, and thoſe affections and paſſions are good, which produce in us good effects and holy actions. If theſe ſweetneſſes, tenderneſſes and conſolations make us more humble, patient, tractable, charitable, and compaſſionate towards our neighbour, more fervent in mortifying our concupiſcences and evil inclinations, more conſtant in our exerciſes, more pliable and ſubmiſſive to thoſe whom we ought to obey, more ſincere and upright in our lives, then without all doubt, *Philothea*, they are from God. But if theſe ſweetneſſes have no ſweetneſs but for ourſelves, if they make us curious, harſh, quarrelſome, impatient, obſtinate, haughty, preſumptuous, and rigorous towards our neighbours, and that taking ourſelves to be already little ſaints, we diſdain to be any longer ſubject to direction, or to correction: 'tis beyond all doubt that ſuch conſolations as theſe are falſe and pernicious. A good tree brings forth none but good fruit.

4. When we ſhall experience theſe ſweetneſſes and conſolations, we muſt humble ourſelves very much before God: and let us beware of ſaying, on occaſion of thoſe delights, *O how good am I?* No *Philothea*, theſe are good things, which do not make us the better; for as I have ſaid, devotion conſiſts not in them: but let us ſay, *O how good is God to ſuch as hope in him, to the ſoul that ſeeks him!* 1. He that

hath ſugar in his mouth, cannot ſay that his mouth is ſweet, but that the ſugar is ſweet; ſo altho' this ſpiritual ſweetneſs be very good, and tho' God, who gives it to us, is moſt good, yet it follows not that he who receiveth it is good. 2. Let us acknowledge ourſelves as yet to be little children, who have need of milk; and that theſe ſugar-plums are given us becauſe our ſpirit is as yet tender, and delicate, and has need of baits and allurements to be enticed to the love of God. 3. But then after this, ſpeaking generally and ordinarily, let us humbly accept of theſe graces and favours, and let us eſteem them to be very great, not ſo much becauſe they are ſo in themſelves, as becauſe it is the hand of God which puts them into our hearts, as a mother would do, who, the more to pleaſe her child, ſhould put the ſugar-plums into his mouth with her own hand, one by one; for if the child had wit, he would value more the ſweetneſs of his mother's tenderneſs and careſſes than the ſweetneſs of the ſugar-plums: and thus, *Philothea*, it is a great matter to have theſe ſweetneſſes; but it is the ſweetneſs of all ſweetneſs to conſider, that God, with his loving and moſt tender hand, puts them as it were, into our mouth, into our heart, into our ſoul, and into our ſpirit. 4. Having thus received them humbly, let us employ them carefully according to the intention of him that giveth them. Now to what end, think we, does God give us theſe ſweetneſſes? To make us ſweet towards every one, and to make us love him. The mother gives ſugar-plums to her child, to make him kiſs her: let us then kiſs our bleſſed Saviour, who gives us theſe ſweet things. Now to kiſs our Saviour, is to obey him, to keep his commandments, to do his will, to follow his deſires; in a word, to embrace him tenderly with obedience and fidelity. When therefore we ſhall receive any ſpiritual conſolation, we muſt on that day be more diligent in doing good, and in humbling ourſelves. 5. Beſides all this, we

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muſt from time to time renounce ſuch ſweetneſſes, tenderneſſes and conſolations, taking off our heart from them, and proteſting that altho' we humbly accept them and love them becauſe God ſends us them, and that they excite us to his love, yet it is not theſe we ſeek, but God himſelf, and his holy love; not the comforts but the Comforter; not the ſweetneſs, but the ſweet Saviour; not the tenderneſs, but him that is the ſweetneſs of heaven and earth. And in this affection we ought to diſpoſe ourſelves to continue conſtant in the holy love of God, altho' in all our life-time we were never to meet with any conſolation; and be ready to ſay, as well upon mount *Calvary* as upon mount *Thabor*; *O Lord, it is good for me to be with thee*, whether thou be upon the croſs, or in thy glory. 6. To conclude, I admoniſh you, that, if there ſhould happen to you any great abundance of ſuch conſolations, tenderneſſes, tears, and ſweetneſſes, or any extraordinary thing in them, you muſt confer faithfully with your ſpiritual conductor, that you may learn how to moderate and behave yourſelf in them: for it is written, *Haſt thou found honey? eat but as much of it as is ſufficient for thee.* Prov. xxv. 16.

CHAP. XIV.

Of ſpiritual dryneſs and barrenneſs

YOU ſhall then do as I have juſt now directed you, dear *Philothea*, when you ſhall have conſolations. But this fine weather which is ſo agreeable will not laſt always; but ſometimes it ſhall happen to you that you ſhall be in ſuch manner deprived and deſtitute of all feeling of devotion, that your ſoul ſhall ſeem to herſelf to be a wild, fruitleſs, barren land, in which there is neither path nor way to find her God, nor any water of grace to refreſh her, becauſe of the dryneſſes which ſeem to threaten

her with a total and abſolute deſolation. Alas! how much does the poor ſoul in this ſtate deſerve compaſſion, and eſpecially when this evil is vehement; for then, in imitation of *David*, ſhe feeds herſelf with tears night and day, while the enemy, to caſt her into deſpair, by a thouſand ſuggeſtions mocks at her, ſaying; Ah! poor wretch, where is thy God? By what path ſhalt thou be able to find him? Who can ever reſtore to thee the joy of his holy grace?

What ſhall you then do, *Philothea*, at that time? Examine well from whence this evil has happened to you: for we ourſelves are often the cauſe of our barrenneſſes and dryneſſes. 1. As a mother refuſes to give ſugar to her child that is ſubject to worms; ſo God takes away conſolations from us, when we take ſome vain complacency in them, and are ſubject to the worms of ſelf-conceit and preſumption. *O my God, it is good for me that thou haſt humbled me*; yes, *for before I was humbled, I did offend thee.* Pſ. cxviii. 2. When we neglect to gather the ſweetneſs and delights of the love of God at the proper time, he removes them from us in puniſhment of our ſloth. The *Iſraelite*, who did not gather the *manna* betimes in the morning, could gather none after ſun-riſing, for then it was all melted away, 3. We are ſometimes laid in the bed of ſenſual contentments and periſhable conſolations, as the ſacred ſpouſe was in the *Canticles*; the Spouſe of our ſouls comes and knocks at the door of our heart, and inſpires us to return to our ſpiritual exerciſes, but we put him off, becauſe we are unwilling to quit theſe vain amuſements, and to ſeparate ourſelves from theſe falſe ſatisfactions: for this reaſon he goes away, and lets us lie on. So that afterwards, when we have a mind to ſeek him, we have great difficulty to find him: and 'tis no more than what we have well deſerved, ſince we have been ſo unfaithful and ſo diſloyal to his love, as to have refuſed the exerciſe of it, to follow that of the things

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of the world. Ah! you ſtill keep the flour of *Egypt*, you ſhall not then have the *manna* of heaven. *Bees* deteſt all kind of artificial odours: and the ſweetneſſes of the Holy Spirit are incompatible with the artificial delights of the world.

4. The double dealing, and ſubtlety, which one uſes in the confeſſions and ſpiritual communications one holds with one's director, may alſo produce dryneſs and barrenneſs; for ſince you lye to the Holy Ghoſt, 'tis no wonder if he refuſe you his conſolations. If you will not be ſincere and plain as a little child, you ſhall not then have the ſugar-plums of little children

5. You have glutted yourſelf with worldly pleaſures, 'tis no wonder then if ſpiritual delights be unſavoury to you: doves already filled (ſays the antient proverb) find cherries bitter. *He hath filled the hungry with good things*, (ſays our bleſſed Lady, S. Luke i. 33.) *and hath ſent the rich away empty.* They that are rich with the pleaſures of the world are not capable of rhe delights of the ſpirit.

6. Have you been careful to preſerve the fruits of the conſolations which you have received? If ſo, you ſhall receive new ones; for to him that has, more ſhall be given; but he that has not kept what was given to him, but has loſt it by his own fault, ſhall be deprived even of thoſe favours and graces which he had not, but which were prepared for him. It is true, the rain gives life to the plants that have ſome verdure; but from thoſe that have none it quite takes away all future life, for it wholly rotteth them.

For many ſuch cauſes we are liable to loſe the conſolations of devotion, and to fall into dryneſs and barrenneſs of ſpirit. Let us then examine our conſcience, whether we can find in ourſelves any ſuch like faults: but obſerve *Philothea*, that this examination is not to be made with unquietneſs, and too much curioſity; but after we have faithfully conſidered our comportment in thoſe reſpects, if we find the

cauſe of the evil in ourſelves, let us thank God for this diſcovery; for the evil is half cured, when the cauſe of it is diſcovered: if on the contrary you can find nothing in particular, which may ſeem to you to have given cauſe for this dryneſs, trouble not yourſelf about any more curious inquiſition; but with all ſimplicity, without examining any more particularities, do this which I ſhall tell you.

Firſt, Humble yourſelf very much before God, in the knowledge of your nothingneſs and miſery. Alas! what am I, when I am left to myſelf? Nothing, O Lord, but a dry parched ground, which being ſplit on every ſide, witneſſes its thirſt for the rain from heaven; and in the mean time the wind diſperſes and reduces it to duſt. 2. Call upon God, and beg comfort of him. *Reſtore unto me, O Lord, the joy of thy ſalvation. Father, if it can be, let this chalice paſs away from me.* Away with thee, O thou barren north-wind, that withereſt my ſoul, and come, O gracious wind of conſolations, and blow upon my garden, that its good affections may ſpread abroad the odour of ſweetneſs. 3. Go to your confeſſor, open faithfully your heart to him, let him ſee well all the plaits and ſeveral folds of your ſoul; take the advices which he ſhall give you with great ſimplicity and humility; for God, who infinitely loves obedience, oftentimes renders profitable the counſels we take from others, eſpecially from thoſe who are the guides of our ſoul, even when otherwiſe there might be no great appearance of ſucceſs. As he made the waters of *Jordan* healthful to *Naaman*; the uſe of which *Eliſeus* had ordained him, without any appearance of human reaſon; 4. Kings v. 14. 4. But after all this there is nothing ſo profitable, nothing ſo fruitful in theſe dryneſſes and barrenneſſes, as not to let one's affection be too ſtrongly bent upon the deſire of being delivered from them. I do not ſay, that we ought not ſimply to wiſh for a deliver-

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ance, but I ſay, that we ought not to ſet our heart upon it: but rather to yield ourſelves up to the pure mercy of the ſpecial providence of God, that he may make uſe of us to ſerve him as long as he pleaſes, in the midſt of theſe thorns, and amongſt theſe deſerts. Let us then ſay to God at theſe times, *O Father, if it be poſſible, let this chalice paſs away from me:* but let us alſo add with great courage, *yet not my will but thine be done.* And here let us ſtop with as much tranquillity as we are able. For God, ſeeing us in this holy indifferency, will comfort us with many graces and favours; as when he ſaw *Abraham* reſolved to deprive himſelf of his ſon *Iſaac*, he contented himſelf with ſeeing him in this diſpoſition of a pure reſignation, and comforted him with a moſt delightful viſion, and with moſt ſweet benedictions. We ought then in all kinds of afflictions, whether corporal or ſpiritual, and the diſtractions, or ſubſtractions of ſenſible devotion which happen to us, to ſay with our whole heart, and with a profound ſubmiſſion, Job i. 21. *The Lord gave me conſolations, and the Lord has taken them away; his holy name be for ever bleſſed.* For if we continue in this humility, he will reſtore us his delightful favours, as he did to *Job*, who conſtantly uſed the like words in all his deſolations.

Finally, *Philothea*, in the midſt of all our dryneſſes and barenneſſes, let us not loſe courage, but waiting with patience for the return of conſolations, let us go on in our way, and not leave off for that any of our exerciſes of devotion, but, if it be poſſible, let us multiply our good works; and not being able to preſent to our dear ſpouſe liquid ſweet-meats, let us offer him dry ones; for all is one to him, provided that the heart, which offers them, be perfectly fixt in the reſolution and will of loving him. When the ſpring is fair, the *bees* make more honey, and fewer young ones; for the fine weather favouring them, they are ſo buſy in their harveſt upon the flowers, that they forget the production of their young ones: but when the ſpring

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is ſharp and cloudy, they get more young ones and leſs honey; for not being able to go forth to gather honey, they employ themſelve to increaſe their people, and to multiply their race: ſo it happens many times, O *Philothea*, that the ſoul, finding herſelf in the fair ſpring of ſpiritual conſolations, amuſes herſelf ſo much in gathering and ſucking them, that in the abundance of theſe ſweet delights ſhe produces much fewer good works: and on the contrary, in the midſt of ſpiritual dryneſſes and deſolations, the more deſtitute ſhe finds herſelf of the ſweet feelings of devotion, the more ſhe multiplies ſolid good works, and abounds in the inward generation of the true virtues of patience, humility, contempt of herſelf, reſignation, and abnegation of her own ſelf-love.

It is a miſtake of many, eſpecially of women, to believe, that the ſervice we do to God without reliſh, without tenderneſs of heart, and ſenſible ſatisfaction, is leſs agreeable to his divine Majeſty: ſince on the contrary our actions are like roſes, which though being freſh, they have more beauty, yet being dry, they have more ſweetneſs and ſtrength: for even ſo, tho' our works done with tenderneſs of heart are more agreeable to ourſelves; to ourſelves, I ſay, who regard only our own delight; yet when they are performed in the time of dryneſs and barrenneſs, they have more ſweetneſs and value in the ſight of God. Yes, dear *Philothea*, in the time of dryneſs, our will carries us to the ſervice of God, as it were by main force; and conſequently, it muſt needs be more vigorous and conſtant, than in the time of conſolation.

It is no ſuch great matter to ſerve a prince in the ſweets of the time of peace, and amongſt the delights of the court; but to ſerve him in the midſt of the hardſhips of war, amongſt troubles and perſecutions, is a true mark of conſtancy and fidelity. *B. Angela de Fulgino* ſays, that the prayer, which is moſt acceptable

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to God, is that which is made by force and conſtraint, that is to ſay, the prayer to which we apply ourſelves, not for any reliſh we find in it, nor by inclination, but purely to pleaſe God, to which our will carries us againſt our inclinations, violently forcing its way thro' the dryneſſes and repugnances which oppoſe it. I ſay the ſame of all ſorts of good works; for the more contradictions we find in doing them, whether exterior or interior, the more are they eſteemed and prized in the ſight of God. The leſs there is of our particular intereſt in the purſuit of virtues, the more the purity of divine love ſhines forth in them. A child eaſily kiſſes his mother when ſhe gives him ſugar; but it is a ſign of a great love, if he kiſſes her after ſhe has given him wormwood, or other bitter potion

CHAP. XV.

A confirmation and illuſtration of what has been ſaid, by a notable example.

TO make this whole inſtruction more evident, I will here ſet down an excellent paſſage of the hiſtory of S. *Bernard*, in ſuch manner as I have found it in a learned and judicious writer. He ſays then as follows: It is an ordinary thing with almoſt all them that begin to ſerve God, and that are not yet experienced in the ſubſtractions of grace, nor in ſpiritual viciſſitudes, that the ſweetneſs of ſenſible devotion being withdrawn from them, together with that agreeable light which invites them to run forward in the way of God, they preſently loſe their breath and fall into puſillanimity and ſadneſs of heart. Underſtanding perſons give this reaſon for it; that our reaſonable nature cannot hold out for a long time famiſhed as it were, and without ſome kind of delight either heavenly or earthly. Now as ſouls which are lifted up above themſelves by an eſſay of the pleaſures above, eaſily renounce viſible objects: ſo, when by the divine diſ-

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poſition ſpiritual joy is taken away from them, while they find themſelves on the other hand deprived of corporal conſolations, and are not yet accuſtomed to expect with patience the return of the true ſun, it ſeems to them, that they are neither in heaven nor on earth: and that they ſhall remain buried in a perpetual night; ſo that like little infants, when they are weaning, having loſt their teats they languiſh and moan, and become uneaſy and troubleſome, more eſpecially to themſelves. This then happened, in the journey mentioned in the hiſtory, to one of the company, whoſe name was *Geoffry of Peronne*, who had lately dedicated himſelf to the ſervice of God. He being ſuddenly become quite dry, deprived of conſolation, and poſſeſſed with interior darkneſs, began to remember his worldly friends, his kindred, and the riches he had lately forſaken. By which means he was aſſaulted with ſo ſtrong a temptation, that not being able to hide it in his behaviour, one of his greateſt confidents perceived it; and having opportunely accoſted him with mild words, ſaid to him in private, What means this, *Geoffry*? Whence comes it, that contrary to cuſtom, thou makeſt thy ſelf ſo penſive and melancholy? Ah, brother! anſwered *Geoffry*, with a deep ſigh, I ſhall never more be joyful while I live. This other moved to pity, by theſe words, preſently went with a brotherly zeal, and told all this to their common father S. *Bernard*, who ſeeing the danger, went in to the next church to pray to God for him; and *Geoffry* in the mean while overwhelmed with ſadneſs, reſting his head upon a ſtone, fell aſleep: but after a little time both of them aroſe, the one from prayer, having obtained the grace he aſked, the other from ſleep, with ſo pleaſant and ſerene a countenance, that his dear friend wondering at ſo great and ſudden a change, could not refrain from reproaching him in a friendly manner with the anſwer he had a little before given him. Then *Geoffry* replied; If I told thee before, that I ſhould never

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more be joyful; I assure thee now that I shall never more be sorrowful.

Such was the issue of the temptation of that devout person. But observe in this relation, dear *Philothea*, 1. That God commonly gives some fore-tastes of heavenly delights to such as enter into his service, so to withdraw them from earthly pleasures, and to encourage them in the pursuit of divine love; as a mother who, to entice and allure her little child to her breasts, puts honey upon her teats. 2. That nevertheless this same good God sometimes, according to his wise disposition, takes away from us the milk and the honey of consolations, to the end that, by his weaning us in this manner, we may learn to feed on the more dry and solid bread of a vigorous devotion, exercised under the trial of distastes and temptations. 3. That sometimes very great temptations arise amidst these drynesses and barrennesses, and then we must constantly fight against the temptations, for they are not from God: but withal we must patiently suffer the drynesses, for God has ordained them for our exercise. 4. That we must never lose courage among these inward pains and uneasinesses, nor say with good *Geoffry*, I shall never more be joyful; for in the midst of the night we must look for the return of the light. And again, in the fairest spiritual weather that we can have, we must not say, I shall never more be uneasy: No; for as the wise man says, *In the day of good things we must not be unmindful of evil things*, Eccles. xi. 27. We must hope in the midst of afflictions, and fear in the midst of prosperities; and as well in the one as in the other occasion we must always humble ourselves. 5. That it is a sovereign remedy to discover our evil to some spiritual friend, who may be able to comfort us.

In fine, for conclusion of this so nececessary instruction, I observe, that as in all other things, so in these, our good God and our enemy have contrary pretensions:

pretenſions: for God ſeeks by them to bring us to a great purity of heart, to an entire renounciation of our own intereſt in what concerns his ſervice, and to a perfect diveſting us of ourſelves: but the wicked one endeavours to make uſe of theſe pains to cauſe us to loſe courage, and to make us turn back to the ſide of ſenſual pleaſures, and in fine, to render us troubleſome both to ourſelves and to others, that ſo he may diſgrace and defame holy devotion. But if you obſerve theſe leſſons, which I have given you, you ſhall advance greatly in perfection, in the exerciſe you ſhall make of it amidſt theſe interior afflictions, the ſubject of which I will not diſcharge without telling you a word more.

Sometimes theſe loathings, theſe barenneſſes and dryneſſes proceed from an indiſpoſition of body; as when through the exceſs of watching, labouring and faſting, one finds one's ſelf oppreſſed with wearineſs, drowſineſs, heavineſs, and ſuch like infirmities; which though they depend on the body, yet fail not to incommode the ſpirit alſo, by reaſon of the ſtrict connexion there is between the two. Now, on ſuch occaſions, we muſt always remember to perform many acts of virtue with the point of our ſpirit and our ſuperior will. For although our whole ſoul ſeems to be aſleep and to be overwhelmed with drowſineſs and wearineſs, yet the actions of our ſpirit ceaſe not to be very acceptable to God: and we may ſay at that time with the ſacred ſpouſe, Cantic. v. 2. *I ſleep, but my my heart watcheth.* And as I ſaid before, if there be leſs reliſh in working in this manner, yet there is more merit and virtue. Now the remedy in ſuch occurrences is to recover the ſtrength and vigour of the body by ſome kind of lawful refreſhment and recreation. So S. *Francis* ordained, that his religious ſhould uſe ſuch moderation in their labours, as not to oppreſs the fervour of the ſpirit.

And as I am ſpeaking of this glorious father, he was himſelf once aſſaulted and perplexed with ſo profound

found a melancholy of ſpirit, that he could not help ſhewing it in his behaviour: for if he had a mind to converſe with his religious, he was not able; if he withdrew himſelf from them, it was worſe; abſtinence and corporal mortification oppreſſed him, and prayer gave him no relief. He continued two years in this manner, ſo that he ſeemed to be quite forſaken by God: but at length, after he had humbly ſuffered this violent ſtorm, our Saviour in a moment reſtored him to a happy tranquillity. This ſhews that the greateſt ſervants of God are ſubject to theſe ſhocks, and therefore the leſſer ought not to be aſtoniſhed, if ſometimes they happen to them.

THE

FIFTH PART

OF THE

INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING

EXERCISES AND INSTRUCTIONS

To renew the SOUL, and confirm her in DEVOTION.

CHAP. I.

That we ought every year to renew our good reſolutions by the following exerciſes.

THE firſt point of theſe exerciſes conſiſts in being rightly ſenſible of the importance of them. Our human nature eaſily falls off from its good affections, becauſe of the frailty and of the evil inclination of our fleſh, which weighs down the ſoul, and draws her always downwards, unleſs ſhe often raiſe herſelf upwards by main force of reſolution; as birds fall ſuddenly down to the ground, if they do not multiply the efforts and the ſtrokes of their wings, to keep themſelves flying. For this reaſon, dear *Philothea*, you have need to renew and to repeat very often the good purpoſes you have to ſerve God, for fear leſt neglecting this you ſhould fall back into your former ſtate, or rather into a ſtate far worſe; for ſpiritual falls have

have this property, that they always caſt us down lower than the ſtate was, from which we aſcended up to devotion.

There is no watch, be it ever ſo good, but muſt be daily wound up, and from time to time be taken in pieces, to remove the ruſt and the dirt it has gathered, and to mend or repair what may ſtand in need of it; in like manner, he that has a true care of his own dear ſoul, ought to wind it up daily to God by the exerciſes heretofore ſet down, and ſhould moreover many times take a review of his own ſtate, to redreſs and rectify it, and at leaſt once a year ſhould take it in pieces, and examine diligently every part of it, that is to ſay all its affections and paſſions, to the end that all the defects that are there may be repaired: and as the watch-maker with ſome delicate oils anoints the wheels, the ſprings, and all the movements of his watch, that the motions may be more eaſy, and the whole leſs ſubject to ruſt; ſo the devout perſon, after having put in practice this review of his heart, to renew it well indeed, muſt anoint it with the ſacraments of confeſſion and the holy euchariſt. This exercise will repair your forces impaired by time, will warm your heart, will give freſh vigour to your good reſolutions, and will make the virtues of your ſpirit flouriſh again. The ancient chriſtians practiſed this diligently on the anniverſary day of the baptiſm of our Lord, on which, (as S. *Gregory Nazianzen* witneſſes) they renewed that profeſſion and thoſe proteſtations, which are uſually made in baptiſm. Let us do the ſame, my dear *Philothea*, diſpoſing ourſelves moſt willingly to it, and employing ourſelves very ſeriouſly in it. Having then choſen the moſt convenient time for this according to the advice of your ghoſtly father, and withdrawn yourſelf into a little more ſolitude than ordinary, both ſpiritually and really, you ſhall make one or two, or three meditations on the following points, according to the method I have given you in the ſecond part.

CHAP. II.

Conſiderations on the favour which God does us, in calling us to his ſervice, according to the proteſtation ſet down heretofore.

CONSIDER the points of your proteſtation. The firſt is, to have forſaken, caſt away, deteſted, and renounced for ever all mortal ſin. The ſecond is, to have dedicated and conſecrated your ſoul, your heart, and your body, with all that depends on them, to the love and ſervice of God. The third is, that if you ſhould chance to fall into any evil action, you would immediately riſe again by the help of God's grace. Are not theſe beautiful, juſt, worthy and generous reſolutions? Conſider well in your ſoul, how holy, how reaſonable, and how deſirable this proteſtation is!

2. Conſider to whom you have made this proteſtation; for it is to God. If our rational words given to men bind us ſtrictly, how much more thoſe we have given to God? *It is to thee, O Lord!* (ſaid *David*, Pſ. xliv.) *my heart hath ſpoken it, my heart hath ſent forth this good word, O I will never forget it.*

3. Conſider in whoſe preſence you made it; for it was before the whole court of heaven. Alas! the bleſſed Virgin, S. *Joſeph*, your good Angel S. *Lewis*, and all that bleſſed company beheld you, and ſighed at your words with ſighs of joy and approbation; and ſaw with the eyes of unſpeakable love, your heart proſtrate at the feet of your Saviour, conſecrating itſelf to his ſervice: there was a particular joy on that occaſion in the heavenly *Jeruſalem*; and there will be now a commemoration of the ſame, if with a good heart you renew your reſolutions.

4. Conſider by what means you were brought to make your proteſtation. Ah! how good and gracious was

was God to you at that time? O tell me the truth, were you not invited to it by the ſweet attractions of the Holy Ghoſt? The cords, with which God drew your little boat to this bleſſed haven, were they not of love and charity? How did he ſeek to allure you with his divine ſugar, by the ſacraments, by ſpiritual reading, and by prayer? Alas! dear *Philothea*, you were aſleep, and God watched over you; and he thought over your ſoul thoughts of peace, he meditated in your favour meditations of love.

5. Conſider at what time God drew you to theſe great reſolutions, for it was in the flower of your age. Ah! what a happineſs it is to learn betimes that which we cannot know but too late. S. *Auſtin*, having been called at the age of thirty years, cried out: *O ancient beauty! how comes it that I have known thee ſo late? Alas! I ſaw thee before, but conſidered thee not.* And you may well ſay, O ancient ſweetneſs! why did not I reliſh thee before? Alas! you did not even then deſerve it. However, acknowledging the great grace God has done you in drawing you to him in your youth, ſay with *David*: Pſ. lxx. 17. *Thou haſt taught me, O my God, from my youth, and I will for ever declare thy wondeful works.* But if this has been in your old age, ah, *Philothea*, what a grace was it, that after you had thus miſpent all your former years, God ſhould call you before your death, and ſhould ſtop the courſe of your miſery at a time, in which if it had continued, you muſt have been miſerable for eternity.

6. Conſider the effects of this vocation, and I believe you will find in yourſelf a great change for the better, comparing what you now are with what you have been. Do you not eſteem it a happineſs to know how to converſe with God by prayer; to be affected with a deſire to love him; to have tamed and appeaſed many paſſions which were troubleſome to you; to have avoided many ſins and perplexities

of

of conſcience; and in fine, to have communicated ſo much oftner than you would have done, uniting yourſelf to that ſovereign ſource of never-ending grace? Ah, how great are theſe favours! We muſt weigh them, *Philothea*, with the weights of the ſanctuary: it is God's right-hand that hath done all this: *The right-hand of the Lord*, (ſays *David*, Pſ. cxvii.) *hath exalted me: I ſhall not die but live, and ſhall declare with my heart, with my mouth, and by my actions, the wonderful works of the Lord.*

After all theſe conſiderations, which, as you ſee, furniſh you with plenty of pious affections, you muſt ſimply conclude with thankſgiving, and an affectionate prayer for your making good uſe of them: and ſo retire with humility and a great confidence in God, deferring the making the effort of your reſolutions, till after the ſecond point of this exerciſe.

CHAP. III.

On the examination of our ſoul concerning her advancement in a devout life.

THIS ſecond point of the exerciſe is ſomewhat long, and to practiſe it, I muſt tell you, it is not neceſſary that you ſhould peform it all at once, but at different times; ſo as to take what regards your comportment towards God for one time, what regards your own ſelf for another time, what concerns your neighbour for a third, and the conſideration of your paſſions for the fourth. It is not neceſſary nor expedient that you ſhould perform it on your knees; only the beginning, and the end, which compriſes the affections. The other points of the examination you may perform profitably in walking, and ſtill more profitably in bed, ſuppoſing you can be there ſome time without drowſineſs, and thoroughly awake; but then to do this, you muſt have read them well beforehand.

It

It is neceſſary however to go through all this ſecond point in three days and two nights at the furtheſt, taking on each day and each night ſome hour, that is to ſay, ſome time for it, as you ſhall be able. For if this exerciſe ſhould only be done at times far diſtant one from another, it would loſe its force, and make but weak impreſſions on you.

After every point of the examination you muſt remark what you ſhall find yourſelf to have failed in, and in what things you are ſtill defective, and what are the principal diſorders you have diſcovered, that ſo you may declare them; in order to take counſel, reſolution, and ſpiritual ſtrength. And although on thoſe days, in which you ſhall perform this and the other exerciſes, it is not neceſſary abſolutely to withdraw yourſelf from all company, yet you muſt be in ſome meaſure retired, eſpecially towards the evening, that you may go ſooner to bed, and take that repoſe of body and mind which is neceſſary for conſideration. And in the day-time you muſt make frequent aſpirations to God, to our Lady, to the Angels, and to all the heavenly *Jeruſalem*: moreover all this muſt be done with a heart in love with God, and the perfection of your ſoul.

To begin then this examination well, 1. Place yourſelf in the preſence of God. 2. Invoke the Holy Ghoſt, begging of him light and underſtanding, that you may know yourſelf well, crying out with S. *Auſtin* to God in the ſpirit of humility, *O Lord let me know thee, and let me know myſelf*: and with S. *Francis*, aſking of God, *Lord who art thou, and who am I?* Proteſt that 'tis not your meaning to remark your advancement, to the end you may take joy in yourſelf on that occaſion, but that you may rejoice at it in God; not that you may glorify yourſelf, but glorify God, and give him thanks for it. Proteſt likewiſe that if you find, as you think you ſhall, that you have made but little advancement, or even that

you have gone backward, you will not for all that by any means be dejected, nor grow colder, by any ſort of puſillanimity or faintheartedneſs; but on the contrary that you will encourage and animate yourſelf the more, humble yourſelf, and apply proper remedies to your defects with the aſſiſtance of God's grace. This done, conſider calmly and quietly how you have behaved yourſelf to the preſent hour towards God, towards your neighbour, and with regard to yourſelf.

CHAP. IV.

An examination of the ſtate of our ſoul towards God.

HOW ſtands your heart with regard to mortal ſin? Have you a firm reſolution never to commit it, on any account whatſoever? And has this reſolution continued with you from the time of your profeſſation till the preſent time? In this reſolution conſiſts the foundation of the ſpiritual life.

How is your heart diſpoſed, with regard to the commandments of God? Do you find them good, ſweet and agreeable? Ah! my child, he whoſe taſte is in good order, and whoſe ſtomach is ſound, loves good meats, and rejects the bad.

How is your heart affected with regard to venial ſins? We cannot keep ourſelves ſo pure as not to fall now and then into ſuch ſins; but is there none to which you have a particular inclination, or, which would be ſtill worſe, is there none to which you bear an affection and love?

How is your heart affected with relation to ſpiritual exerciſes? Do you love them? Do you eſteem them? Do they not make you uneaſy? Are you not diſguſted with them? To which of them do you find yourſelf leſs or more inclined? To hear the word of God, to read it, to diſcourſe of it, to meditate, to aſpire to God,

God, to go to confeſſion, to receive ſpiritual advices, to prepare yourſelf for communion, to communicate, to reſtrain your affections: in all this, what is there that goes againſt your heart? And if you find any thing, to which this heart of yours has leſs inclination, examine from whence this diſlike ariſes, and what is the cauſe of it.

How ſtands your heart towards God himſelf? Does your heart take pleaſure in the remembrance of God? Does this remembrance leave an agreeable ſweetneſs behind it? *Ah!* ſaid *David*, *I remembered God, and I was delighted.* Do you find a certain facility in your heart to love God, and a particular contentment in reliſhing this love? Does not your heart recreate itſelf in thinking on the immenſity of God, on his goodneſs, on his ſweetneſs? If the remembrance of God comes to you amidſt the occupations of the world and its vanities, does it not make itſelf room? Does it not ſeize upon your heart? Does it not ſeem to you that your heart turns towards that ſide, and as it were goes to meet her God? Certainly there are ſuch ſouls to be found.

A loving wife, when her huſband comes home from a far country, as ſoon as ſhe is ſenſible of his being returned, or hears his voice, although ſhe be engaged in buſineſs, and forcibly detained from him in the midſt of the crowd, yet her heart is not withheld from him, but leaves all other thoughts, to think on her huſband, who is returned: it is the ſame with ſouls that love God well; let them be ever ſo buſy, when the remembrance of God comes near them, they loſe almoſt the thought of all things elſe, for joy to ſee that this dear remembrance is returned; and this is an extreme good ſign.

How is your heart affected towards Jeſus Chriſt, God and man? Do you pleaſe yourſelf about him? *Bees* pleaſe themſelves about their honey, and *waſps* about corrupted things? ſo good ſouls take their con-

tentment in thinking on Jeſus Chriſt, and have an extreme tenderneſs of love towards him, but the wicked pleaſe themſelves about vanities.

How is your heart affected towards our bleſſed Lady, the Saints, and your good Angel? Do you love them well? Have you a ſpecial confidence in their patronage? Are you pleaſed with their pictures, with their lives, and with their praiſes?

As to your tongue: how do you ſpeak of God? Do you pleaſe yourſelf to ſpeak well of him, according to your condition and ability? Do you love to ſing praiſes to him?

As to works: conſider whether you take to heart the exterior glory of God, and the doing ſomething for his honour: for ſuch as love God, love with *David* the adorning of his houſe.

Can you find that you have forſaken any affection, or renounced any thing for God? for it is a good ſign of love, to deprive ourſelves of any thing in favour of him whom we love. What have you then hitherto forſaken for the love of God?

CHAP. V.

An examination of our ſtate, with regard to ourſelves.

HOW do you love yourſelf? Do you not love yourſelf too much for this world? If ſo, you will deſire to live always here, and will be very ſolicitous to eſtabliſh yourſelf on this earth; but if you love yourſelf for heaven, you will deſire, or at leaſt be contented to depart from hence, at whatſoever hour it ſhall pleaſe our Lord.

Do you keep due order in the love of yourſelf? For the inordinate love of ourſelves is the only thing that ruins us. Now well ordered love requires that we ſhould love the ſoul better than the body; that we ſhould take more care to acquire virtues than any thing

thing elſe: that we ſhould make more account of the honour of heaven, than of that honour which is low and periſhable. A well-ordered heart will oftener ſay in itſelf, What will the Angels ſay, if I think upon ſuch a thing, than What will men ſay?

What love have you for your own heart? Are you not unwilling to ſerve it in its ſickneſſes? Alas! you owe it this care to aſſiſt it, and to procure aſſiſtance for it, when paſſions torment it, and to lay aſide all things for that.

What do you eſteem yourſelf before God? Nothing, without doubt. It is no great humility in a fly, to eſteem herſelf nothing in compariſon of a mountain, nor for a drop of water to hold itſelf for nothing in compariſon of the ſea, nor for a ſpark of fire to hold itſelf nothing in reſpect of the ſun: but humility conſiſts in not eſteeming ourſelves above others, and in not deſiring to be ſo eſteemed by others. How are you diſpoſed in this regard?

As to your tongue: Do you not boaſt of yourſelf one way or other? Do you not flatter yourſelf in ſpeaking of yourſelf?

As for works: Do you allow yourſelf no pleaſure contrary to your health; I mean no vain or unprofitable pleaſure, or any watching too much without cauſe, or any ſuch like thing?

CHAP. VI.

An examination of the ſtate of our ſoul toward our neighbour.

THE love of huſband and wife ought to be ſweet and calm, ſtrong, conſtant, and continual, and this principally becauſe God ordains it, and it is his will. I ſay the ſame of the love of our children, and our near relations, and alſo of our friends, every one according to his rank.

But to ſpeak in general, how is your heart affected towards your neighbour? Do you love him from your heart, and for the love of God? To diſcern this well, you muſt repreſent to yourſelf certain troubleſome and intractable people, for it is here we exerciſe the love of God towards our neighbour, and much more with regard to ſuch as injure us either by their actions or by their words. Examine well if your heart be free in their regard, or whether you do not find a greater repugnancy to love them.

Are you not apt to ſpeak ill of your neighbour, and eſpecially of ſuch as do not love you? Do you do no evil to your neighbour, either directly or indirectly? Provided you be reaſonable, you will eaſily perceive it.

CHAP. VII.

An examination of the affections of our ſoul.

I HAVE thus drawn out into length theſe points, in the examination of which conſiſts the knowledge of the ſpiritual advancement we have made: for as to the examination of ſins, that is rather for the confeſſions of ſuch as think not of advancing themſelves.

Yet we muſt not labour upon every one of theſe articles, otherwiſe than fair and ſoftly, conſidering in what ſtate our heart has been in their regard ſince our reſolution, and what conſiderable faults we have committed in them.

But to abridge the whole: we muſt reduce the examen to the ſearch into our paſſions; and if it be troubleſome to conſider every point ſo much in particular as has been ſaid, we may examine ourſelves, what we have been, and how we have behaved ourſelves, in our love to God, to our neighbour, and to ourſelves: in our hatred to ſin in ourſelves, and to ſin in others; for we muſt deſire the extirpation both of the one and the other: in our deſires relating to riches,

riches, relating to pleaſures, relating to honours. In our fear of the dangers of ſin, and in that of the loſs of our worldly goods; for we are apt to fear the one too much, and the other too little: in our hope, placed too much perhaps on the world and on the creature, and too little on God and things eternal: in our ſadneſs, if it be too exceſſive for vain things; and in our joy if it be too great, and for things unworthy of it: in fine what affections keep our heart entangled: what paſſions poſſeſs it, in what it has principally gone out of the way. For by the paſſions of the ſoul we may judge of her ſtate, by examining them one after another: for as he that plays on the lute, by touching all the ſtrings, finds which are out of tune, and accords them either by winding them up, or letting them down; ſo we having examined the love, hatred, deſire, hope, ſadneſs and joy of our ſoul, if we find them out of tune for that harmony which we deſire to make, which is the glory of God, we may accord them by means of his grace, and the counſel of our ghoſtly father.

CHAP. VIII.

Affections to be exerciſed after this examination.

AFTER you have quietly conſidered each point of the examination, and ſeen in what ſtate you are, you ſhall proceed to the affections in this manner.

1. Give God thanks for what little amendment you may have found in your life ſince your reſolution; and acknowledge, that it has been his mercy alone that has wrought it in you and for you.

2. Humble yourſelf very much before God, acknowledging, that if you have not advanced much it has been through your own fault, becauſe you have not faithfully, courageouſly, and conſtantly correſponded with the inſpirations, lights and motions,

which he has given you in prayer, and at other times.

3. Promiſe him that you will eternally praiſe him for the graces exerciſed in your favour, to bring you off from your evil inclinations to this little amendment.

4. Aſk pardon of him for your unfaithfulneſs and your diſloyalty, in not correſponding with his graces.

5. Offer him up your heart, to the end he may make himſelf the entire maſter of it.

6. Beſeech him to make you quite faithful to him.

7. Invoke the Saints, the bleſſed Virgin, your good Angel, your patron, S. *Joſeph*, and ſo of the reſt.

CHAP. IX.

Conſiderations proper to renew our good purpoſes.

AFTER you have made your examination, and conferred well with ſome worthy director concerning your defects, and the remedies for them, you ſhall make uſe of the following conſiderations, making one of them every day by way of meditation, employing in it the time of your mental prayer, and this always in the ſame method, with regard to the preparation, and to the affections, as you uſed in the meditations of the firſt part; placing yourſelf firſt of all in the preſence of God, and then imploring his grace to eſtabliſh you well in his holy love and ſervice.

CHAP. X.

The firſt conſideration: of the excellency of our ſouls.

CONSIDER the nobility and excellency of your ſoul, endued with an underſtanding which knows

knows not only all this viſible world, but alſo knows that there are Angels and a heaven, knows that there is a moſt high and ſovereign God, moſt good and moſt ineffable, knows that there is an eternity; and further knows the means how to live well in this viſible world, in order to aſſociate herſelf with the Angels in heaven, and to enjoy God for all eternity.

Your ſoul has moreover a will, all noble, which is capable of loving God, and cannot hate him in himſelf. Take a view of your heart, how generous it is; and that as the bees can never ſtay upon any corrupt thing, but only ſtop amongſt the flowers; ſo your heart can never be at reſt but in God alone, no creature can ſatisfy it. Recall boldly to your remembrance the deareſt and ſtrongeſt affections which have heretofore poſſeſſed your heart, and judge in truth, whether they were not full of uneaſy diſquiets, of tormenting thoughts, and of reſtleſs cares, in the midſt of which your poor heart was miſerable.

Alas! our heart running after creatures, eagerly purſues them, thinking to ſatisfy its deſires in them: but as ſoon as it has overtaken them, it finds this ſatisfaction is ſtill afar off; and that nothing can give it content; God not being willing that our heart ſhould find any place where it can reſt, no more than the dove which went out of Noah's ark, to the end it may return to its God, from whom it went out. Ah! what beauty of nature is there in our heart, and why then do we detain it againſt its inclination in the ſervice of creatures?

O! my fair ſoul, (ſhould you ſay) thou art capable of knowing and of loving God, why wilt thou amuſe thyſelf about any thing leſs? Thou may'ſt put in thy claim to eternity, why ſhouldſt thou amuſe thyſelf about theſe moments? It was one of the griefs of the prodigal child, that, when he might have fared deliciouſly at his father's table, he was feeding naſtily among the ſwine. O my ſoul, thou art ca-

pable of God; wo be to thee, if thou content thy ſelf with any thing leſs than God.

Raiſe up your ſoul very much on this conſideration; put her in mind that ſhe is immortal, and worthy of eternity; fill her with courage on this ſubject.

CHAP. XI.

The ſecond conſideration: of the excellency of virtues.

CONSIDER that nothing elſe but virtues and devotion can make your ſoul content in this world. See how beautiful they are! make a compariſon between the virtues and their contrary vices. What ſweetneſs is there in patience, compared with revenge? In meekneſs, in reſpect of anger and vexation? In humility, if compared with arrogance and ambition? In liberality, compared to covetouſneſs? In charity, in compariſon with envy? In ſobriety, in reſpect of revellings? For virtues have this admirable quality, that they delight the ſoul with an incomparable ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction after we have exerciſed them; whereas vices leave the ſoul exceedingly ſpent and diſordered. Why then do we not endeavour to acquire theſe ſweetneſſes?

In caſe of vices, he that has but little of them is not eaſy, and he that has a great deal is more diſcontented; but for virtues, he that hath but a little, has already ſome contentment, which increaſes, as the virtues increaſe.

O devout life! how fair, how lovely, how ſweet, and delightful art thou! thou alleviateſt our tribulations, and addeſt ſweetneſs to our conſolations; without thee, good is evil, and pleaſures are full of reſtleſſneſs, trouble and deceitfulneſs. Ah! he that ſhould know thee well might ſay with the *Samaritan* woman, *Lord give me this water*: an aſpiration very frequent

frequent with the holy mother *Tereſa*, and S. *Catharine* of *Genoa*, altho' upon different occaſions.

CHAP. XII.

The third conſideration: on the example of the ſaints.

CONSIDER the examples of the ſaints of all conditions: what have they not done that they might love God, and be devoted to him? Look on theſe martyrs invincible in their reſolutions, what torments have they not ſuffered to maintain them? But above all, theſe fair and flouriſhing ladies, whiter than the lilies in purity, redder than the roſes in charity, of which ſome at twelve, others at thirteen, fifteen, twenty, and twenty five years of age, have endured a thouſand kinds of martyrdoms rather than they would renounce their reſolution, not only in regard to the profeſſion of their faith, but alſo in what related to their proteſtation of devotion; ſome dying rather than they would forſake their virginity; others rather than they would quit the ſervice of thoſe that were tormented, the comforting the afflicted, and burying the dead. O good God, what conſtancy has this frail ſex ſhewed on the like occaſions?

Conſider ſo many holy confeſſors; with what fortitude have they deſpiſed the world! how invincible have they ſhewed themſelves in their reſolutions? nothing could make them abandon them; they have embraced them without reſerve, and maintained them without exception. Good God! what admirable things does St. *Auſtin* relate of his mother *Monica*? with what conſtancy did ſhe purſue her enterpriſe of ſerving God, both in her marriage, and in her widowhood? And St. *Jerome*, of his dear daughter *Paula*, in the midſt of ſo many oppoſitions, and in the midſt of ſuch a variety of accidents? What is there that we might not do after ſuch excellent patterns? They were what we are, they did

all for the ſame God, for the ſame virtues; why ſhould not we do as much in our condition, and according to our vocation, for our dear reſolution and holy proteſtation?

CHAP. XIII.

The fourth conſideration: of the love that Jeſus Chriſt bears us.

CONSIDER the love with which Jeſus Chriſt our Lord has ſuffered ſo much in this world, and eſpecially in the garden of *Olivet*, and upon mount *Calvary*. This love had you for its object, and by all theſe pains and ſufferings he obtained of God the Father good reſolutions and proteſtations for your heart; and by the ſame means he alſo obtained whatever is neceſſary for you, to maintain, nouriſh, ſtrenghten, and fufil theſe reſolutions. O reſolution, how precious art thou, being the daughter of ſuch a mother as is the paſſion of my Saviour! O how much ought my Soul to cheriſh thee, ſince thou haſt been ſo dear to my ſweet Jeſus! Alas, O Saviour of my ſoul, you died to purchaſe for me theſe reſolutions; O! give me grace to die rather than to loſe them. Obſerve my *Philothea*, it is certain, that the heart of our dear Jeſus ſaw your heart from the tree of the croſs, and loved it, and by this love obtained for it all the good that you ſhall ever have, and amongſt the reſt, your reſolutions. Yes, my dear *Philothea*, we may all ſay with the prophet *Jeremias*; *O Lord, before I had a being thou didſt behold me, and called me by my name*; foraſmuch as his divine goodneſs did indeed prepare for us in his love and mercy all the general and particular means of our ſalvation, and conſequently our good reſolutions. Yes, without doubt; as a woman with child prepares the cradle, the linen, and ſwadling cloths, and

and even a nurſe for the child which ſhe hopes to bring forth, altho' it be not yet in the world: ſo our Saviour, having his goodneſs big with child of you, deſigning to bring you forth to ſalvation, and make you his child, prepared upon the tree of the croſs all that was neceſſary for you, your ſpiritual cradle, your linen and ſwadling cloths, your nurſe, and all that was proper for your happineſs. Such are all the means, all the attractions, all the graces by which he conducts your ſoul, and ſeeks to bring it to perfection. Thus our Lord was on the tree of the croſs in the ſtate of a woman big with child of you.

Ah! my God, how deeply ought we to imprint this in our memory! Is it poſſible that I have been loved, and ſo tenderly loved by my Saviour, that he ſhould think of me in particular, and even in all theſe little occurrences, by which he has drawn me to himſelf? And how much then ought we to love, to cheriſh and to employ well all this to our own profit? This is very ſweet: this amiable heart of my God thought upon *Philothea*, loved her, and procured her a thouſand means of ſalvation, even as much as if there had been no other ſoul in the world for him to think of; juſt as the ſun ſhining upon one place in the earth, enlightens it no leſs than if it ſhined in no other place, but only there: for in the very ſame manner did our Lord think and take care for all his dear children, thinking on each one of us, as tho' he had not thought on the reſt. *He loved me* (ſays St. *Paul) and gave himſelf up for me*; as if he had ſaid, for me alone, juſt as if he had done nothing for the reſt. O *Philothea*, this ought to be engraven in your ſoul, in order to cheriſh well and to nouriſh your reſolution, which has been ſo precious to the heart of our Saviour.

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CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

The fifth consideration: of the eternal love of God towards us.

CONSIDER the eternal love, which God has born you: for before our Lord Jesus Christ, as man, suffered for you on the cross, his divine majesty had already forecast your being in his sovereign goodness, and loved you exceedingly. But when did he begin to love you? Even when he began to be God. And when began he to be God? Never; for he has always been without beginning and without ending, and so he has always loved you from all eternity; and in consequence of this love he prepared for you the graces and favours which he has done you. He says as much by the prophet, Jerem. xxxi. speak-to you as well as to any other, *I have loved thee with a perpetual charity, therefore have I drawn thee unto me, taking pity of thee.* He therefore then thought amongst other things to cause you to make your resolutions to serve him.

O God, what resolutions are these, which God has thought on, meditated on, and projected from all eternity! How dear and precious ought they to be to us! What ought we to suffer, rather than to forsake one tittle of them! no not altho' the whole world were to perish, for all the world together is not worth one soul; and a soul is worth nothing without these resolutions.

CHAP. XV.

General affections on the precedent considerations, and a conclusion of this exercise.

O Dear resolutions! you are the fair tree of life, which my God has planted with his own hand

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in the midſt of my heart, and my Saviour deſires to water with his blood, to make it fruitful: I will rather ſuffer a thouſand deaths, than ſuffer any wind to pluck you up. No, neither vanity, nor delights, nor riches, nor tribulations ſhall ever draw me away from my deſign.

Alas! O Lord, it is you then that have planted, and have eternally kept in your fatherly boſom this fair tree for my garden. Alas! how many ſouls are there, which have not been favoured in this manner, and how then can I ever humble myſelf enough under your mercy?

O fair and holy reſolutions! If I keep you, you will keep me; if you live in my ſoul, my ſoul ſhall live in you: live then for ever, O reſolutions, which are eternal in the mercy of God; be ye and live eternally in me, O let me never forſake you.

After theſe affections, you muſt conſider in particular upon the means neceſſary to maintain theſe dear reſolutions, and proteſt that you will be faithful in making good uſe of them: ſuch as frequent prayer, the ſacraments, good works, the amendment of your faults diſcovered in the examination, retrenching the occaſions of evil, and following the counſels which ſhall be given you in this regard.

This being done, as by way of recovering your breath and your ſtrength, proteſt a thouſand times over that you will continue in your reſolutions; and as if you held your heart, your ſoul, and your will in your hands, dedicate it, conſecrate it, ſacrifice it, immolate it to God, proteſting that you will never take it back again, but will leave it in the hand of his divine majeſty, to follow in all, and through all, his holy ordinances.

Pray to God to renew you intirely, and that he would give his bleſſing to this renewing of your proteſtation, and that he would ſtrengthen it. Invoke the

the B. Virgin, your Angel, St. *Lewis*, and other Saints.

In this emotion of heart go to the feet of your ghoſtly father, accuſe yourſelf of the principal faults which you ſhall have remarked ſince your general confeſſion, and receive abſolution in the ſame manner you did the firſt time, and pronounce your proteſtation before him, and ſign it, and in the concluſion, go unite your renewed heart to its firſt principle and Saviour in the moſt holy ſacrament of the Euchariſt.

CHAP. XVI.

The ſentiments we muſt keep after this exerciſe.

THE day you ſhall have made this renovation, and the other following days, you ought very often to repeat by heart and by mouth thoſe inflamed words of St. *Paul*, St. *Auſtin*, St. *Catharine of Genoa*, and others: *No, I am no more my own: whether I live, or whether I die, I am my Saviour's. I have no longer any thing, of me or mine: my me is Jeſus, and my mine is to be wholly his, O world, thou art always thyſelf, and I have hitherto been always myſelf, but from henceforth I will be myſelf no more.* No, we ſhall be no more ourſelves, for we ſhall have our heart changed, and the world, that has ſo often deceived, ſhall be deceived in us: for not perceiving our change but by little and little, it will think we are ſtill *Eſaus*, and we ſhall find ourſelves to be *Jacobs*. All theſe exerciſes ought to reſt in the heart, and when we take ourſelves away from our conſideration and meditation, we muſt go fair and ſoftly amongſt our affairs and converſations, for fear leſt the liquor of our reſolutions ſhould be ſuddenly ſpilt; for it muſt ſoke and penetrate through all the parts of the ſoul, the whole nevertheleſs without ſtraining either the mind, or the body.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

An answer to two objections which may be made to this introduction.

THE world will tell you, *Philothea*, that these exercises and advices are in so great number, that he, who would practise them, must apply himself to nothing else. Alas, dear *Philothea*, should we do nothing else, we should do enough; since we should do all that we ought to do in this world. But do you not see the delusion? If all these exercises were necessarily done every day, they would indeed be our whole occupation: but it is not requisite to perform them otherwise than in their proper time and place, each one as occasion shall serve. How many civil laws are there in the different collections of them, which ought to be observed? But this is to be understood according to occurrences; and not that every one should practise them every day. *David* was a king charged with most difficult affairs, yet he performed many more exercises than I have prescribed you. St. *Lewis*, a king admirable both in war and peace, and one who with an incomparable care administered justice, and managed his affairs, yet heard two masses every day, said vespers and complin with his chaplain, made his meditation, visited hospitals every *Friday*, confessed, and took the discipline, heard sermons very often, and used very often spiritual conferences; and with all this never lost any one occasion of the publick exterior good, which he did not lay hold of, and diligently put in execution: and his court was more splendid and flourishing, than it had ever been in the time of his predecessors. Perform then these exercises boldly according as I have marked them out for you, and God will give you leisure and strength enough to do all the rest of your affairs; yea,

tho' he ſhould make the ſun ſtand ſtill for you, as he did in the time of *Joſue*. We always do enough, when God works with us.

The world will ſay, that I ſupoſe almoſt throughout the whole work, that my *Philothea* has the gift of mental prayer, and yet every one has it not: ſo that this introduction will not ſerve for all. It is true without doubt, I have preſupoſed that: and it is true alſo, that every one has not the gift of mental prayer; but it is likewiſe true, that almoſt every one may have it, even the moſt dull, ſo that they have but good guides, and are willing to take as much pains to obtain it as it deſerves; and if there ſhould be but ſome who have not this gift in any proportion at all, (which I think can happen but very ſeldom) a wiſe ſpiritual father will eaſily help them to ſupply that defect by the attention he will teach them to the reading, or to the hearing read, theſe ſame conſiderations, which are ſet down in the meditations.

CHAP. XVIII.

The three laſt and principal advices for this introduction.

ON the firſt day of every month repeat the proteſtation ſet down in the firſt part, after your meditation: and at all times proteſt that you are determined to obſerve it; ſaying with *David*, *No, my God, never will I forget thy juſtifications, for in them thou haſt given me life.* Pſ. cxviii. And when you ſhall feel any diſorder in your ſoul, take your proteſtation in hand, and proſtrate in the ſpirit of humility, recite it with your whole heart, and you ſhall find a great eaſe.

Make an open profeſſion that you have a deſire to be devout. I do not ſay you ſhould make a profeſſion of your being devout, but of your deſiring to be devout. And be not aſhamed of thoſe ordinary neceſ-

ſary

ſary actions, which conduct the ſoul to the love of God: acknowledge frankly that you had rather die than commit a mortal ſin: that you reſolve to frequent the ſacraments, and to follow the counſels of your director (tho' many times for ſome good reaſons it may not be neceſſary to name him.) For this frank profeſſion that we deſire to ſerve God, and that we have conſecrated ourſelves to his love by a ſpecial affection, is very acceptable to his divine majeſty, who will not have us be aſhamed either of him or of his croſs. Beſides, it cuts off many propoſals and invitations which the world might make to draw us the contrary way, and obliges us in honour to act according to what we profeſs. The philoſophers profeſſed themſelves philoſophers, that they might be ſuffered to live like philoſophers: and we muſt profeſs ourſelves to be deſirous of devotion, that we may be ſuffered to live devoutly. If any one tell you, you may live devoutly without the practice of theſe advices and exerciſes, do not deny; but anſwer him lovingly, that your weakneſs is ſo great, that you ſtand in need of more help and aſſiſtance than others do.

In fine, my deareſt *Philothea*, I conjure you by all that is holy in heaven and earth, by the baptiſm you have received, by the breaſts which Jeſus Chriſt ſucked, by the charitable heart with which he loved you, and by the bowels of that mercy in which you hope, continue and perſevere in this bleſſed enterprize of a devout Life. Our days ſlide away, death is at the gate; the *trumpet ſounds the retreat* (ſays St. *Gregory Nazianzen*) *let every man be ready, for judgment is near.* S. *Symphorian*'s mother ſeeing him led to martyrdom, cried after him; My ſon, remember eternal life, look up to heaven, and think upon him that reigns there; your approaching end will quickly terminate the ſhort courſe of this life. My *Philothea*, ſhall I ſay the ſame to you? look up to heaven, and do not forfeit it for this earth; look down into hell, and do

not

not caſt yourſelf into it for tranſitory toys: look at Jeſus Chriſt, and do not renounce him for the world: and ſhould the labours of a devout life ſeem hard to you, ſing with S. *Francis*,

How ſweet are all theſe momentary toils,
Which lead to heavenly joys, that know no end!

Live Jeſus! to whom, with the Father and Holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory now and always, and for ages of ages. *Amen.*

FINIS.

The communication of Dr. John Thauler (*an eminent preacher and myſtical divine of the fourteenth century*) *with a poor beggar, containing great leſſons of Chriſtian perfection. Tranſlated from his works, printed at* Paris 1623. p. 833.

THERE was a great divine, who continually prayed to God for the ſpace of eight years that he would be pleaſed to direct him to a man who might ſhew him the way of truth. Now when on a certain time he found his ſoul ſtirred up to deſire this with a more than ordinary fervour, he heard a voice from Heaven, which ſaid to him, Go out to the Church porch, and there thou ſhalt meet with a man, who ſhall teach thee the way of truth. He went out, and found there a certain beggar, with his feet all covered with ſores, dirt and mire, and all the cloaths he had on not worth three farthings. He courteouſly ſaluted him, wiſhing him a good morning. To which the beggar replied, that he did not remember he ever had a bad morning. God proſper you, ſaid the doctor, what is it you ſay? I never was otherwiſe than proſperous, ſaid the beggar. I wiſh you all happineſs, ſaid the Doctor: but what do you mean by ſpeaking in this manner? Why, ſaid the poor man, I never was unhappy. God bleſs you, ſaid the Doctor, explain yourſelf for I do not underſtand your meaning. The poor man anſwered: That I ſhall do very willingly. You wiſhed me, maſter Doctor, a good morning; and I anſwered, that I never had a bad morning: for if I am hungry, I praiſe God: if I ſuffer cold, I praiſe God: if it hail, ſnow, or rain, be the weather fair or foul, I give praiſe to God: if I am miſerable and deſpiſed by all the world, I ſtill give praiſe to God: and therefore I never met with a bad morning. You did alſo pray to God to proſper me: and I anſwered, that I never was otherwiſe than proſpe-

proſperous: becauſe I have learned to live with God, and I know for certain that all he does muſt needs be for the beſt: and therefore whatſoever has come to me, by his gift, or by his permiſſion, whether it were agreeable or diſagreeable, ſweet or bitter, I have always received it with joy, as coming from his hand, and for the beſt: and therefore I never was otherwiſe than proſperous. You wiſhed me alſo all happineſs: and I replied in like manner, that I had never been unhappy: for I have determined to adhere to the divine will alone, to which I have made over all my own will, in ſuch manner, as to will always whatſoever he wills, and therefore I was never unhappy; becauſe I deſire to have no other will but his, and to reſign my will intirely to him. But what would you ſay, ſaid the Doctor, if it ſhould be the will of this Lord of majeſty to caſt you down into the bottomleſs pit? How, ſaid he, caſt me down into the bottomleſs pit? Why, if he really ſhould do ſo, I have two arms to claſp round him: the one is true humility, which I put under him, and by this I am united to his moſt ſacred humanity: the other, which is my right arm, is love, which is united to his divinity; and with this ſame I embrace him ſo cloſe, and hold him ſo faſt, that he would be obliged to go down with me: and I ſhould much rather chooſe to be even in hell with God, than to be in heaven without him. From this diſcourſe the Doctor learnt, that true reſignation, accompanied with profound humility, is the ſhorteſt way to God. After this he aſked the beggar, from whence he came? He anſwered, that he came from God. But where, ſaid the Doctor, did you find God? There, ſaid he, where I left all creatures. And where, or with whom, did you leave God, ſaid the Doctor? I left him, ſaid the poor man, with the clean of heart, and amongſt men of good will. But I pray, who, or what are you? ſaid the the Doctor: I am a king ſaid he. And the Doctor further aſking him, where

his

his kingdom was? He replied, It is in my ſoul: for I can govern ſo well both my exterior and interior ſenſes, that all theſe affections and forces of my ſoul are in ſubjection to me: which kind of kingdom is without all doubt more excellent than all the kingdoms of this world. The Doctor aſked him, what had brought him to this perfection? he anſwered, It was ſilence, ſublime meditations, and his tending always to union with God: for I could never, ſaid he, reſt in any thing that was leſs than God: and now I have found my God, and in him I have peace and everlaſting reſt. *Amen.*

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